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SONNETS,

AND

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

BY

JAMES COCHRANE,

TRANSLATOR OF "HERMAN AND DOROTHEA," FROM THE GERMAN OF GÜTHE,
AND "LOUISA," FROM THE GERMAN OF VOSS.



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DEDICATED
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CAROLINE,
COUNTESS OF BUCHAN,
AS
A MARK OF THE AUTHOR'S REGARD.

PREFACE.

THE Author is by no means certain that this volume, as a whole, is worthy of the notice of the public, and he is quite aware that some of the pieces may be objected to as rather trifling for publication; but he included them in order to gratify some of those to whom they were addressed.

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SONNETS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SEASONS AND NATURE.

SONNETS

I.

THE SONNET.

THE Sonnet is the cherished rose de Meaux
Of poesy, all perfect in its kind,
Albeit small. It is a cameo,
Of size just fitted on the heart to bind.
The poet, and initiated know,
And they alone, the beauties of this gem,
The choicest in the Muse's diadem,
Whose classic form we to Italia owe.
It is an oratory off the aisle
Of the cathedral epic, interlaced
With ornaments elaborate, yet chaste,
And not unworthy of the grander pile.
It is a dome, whose just proportion veils
Its amplitude, and seemingly curtains.

II.

INTRODUCTORY.

How dull were earth if all one level plain,
Horizon-bound on north, south, east, and west !
Even though robed in the lush, gorgeous vest
Of tropic lands, her beauty would be vain,
And we should sigh for barrenness again.
Variety invigorates and gives zest
To all things ; ev'n to those which we love best.
Sunshine needs shadow, pleasure haply pain :
Striplings their independence more enjoy,
Calling to mind the wardship of the boy.
So with the seasons : their vicissitude
Charms irrespective of the sweets they bring :
Summer feels warmer when we think of Spring ;
And sunnier Spring, remembering Winter's mood.

III.

TO THE WINTER ACONITE.

How sweet it is an unexpected pledge
Of friendship to receive in some dull hour,
When Hope has vanished, and misfortunes lour ;
And we stand trembling on their beetling ledge !
Even such art thou, thou little golden wedge !
Blooming so sweetly in the nipping blast,
The earth all frozen, and the sky o'ercast,
And mute the robin on the leafless hedge.
The dreariest day that dawns, the darkest night,
Have something in them still to cheer the heart,
Which like this simple floweret may impart
Both present joy, and hopes of things more bright ;
For art thou not the firstling of the Spring,
And herald of delights she soon will bring ?

IV.

TO THE SNOWDROP.

ERE yet stern Winter from the lawn does lift
His cold white sheet, and ere one warbler sings,
The hard sod piercing, up the Snowdrop springs,
Of the short glimpse of sunshine making thrift;
Flora's first bantling, cradled in the drift.
All welcome thee, sweet Floweret! for thyself,
And as Spring's harbinger; but with vile pelf
Engrossed, few mark the beauties of the gift.
All know thy bud immaculate as snow,
But few the pencilings delicate of green
Within thy chalice; and still fewer know,
That like affection, sometimes cold in mien
When coldly met, sweet fragrance thou dost yield
At the fireside, though none in the cold field.

V.

THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

BUT yesterday the fields were frozen round,
The hills sat cowering 'neath their burdens cold,
Asking if Spring was never to unfold,—
If Boreas' trumpet would for ever sound.
But now the Sun leaps forward with a bound ;
Things yield to gentle influence that did mock
Rude force, and the persistent leaves of oak
And russet beech come rustling to the ground.
Cracks the pellucid ice, and gushes forth,
Gurgling with joy, the long-imprisoned stream ;
The snowdrops and the crocuses, whose birth
Looked premature, in harmony now seem :
The heart elastic beats, and feels no more
The heavy load which yesterday it bore.

VI.

ON FINDING A BUNCH OF WILD VIOLETS EARLY
IN SPRING.

ONE day, in early Spring, at matin hour,
Ere even a crocus decked the gay parterre,
I clambered up a precipice, and there
Found a large tuft of Violets in flower
Within a rocky cavity. A shower
O'er night had fallen, and every cup was wet,
And sparkled bright as if with diamonds set,
Heightening the sweetness of this vernal dower.
Wondering I gazed to think of Nature here
Lavishing beauty where no foot e'er trod;
When bouncing on like one who knew the road,
A big wild bee came buzzing past my ear,
And rifling first one blossom, then another,
Cried, "Blame not Nature rashly, my good brother.

VII.

SPRING.

I.

OPEN the orient portals of the sky,
And young Spring, timid, at the porch is seen,
Looking to earth with hesitating mien,
But doubtful of adventuring from on high :
Meanwhile, in sweet suspense, her to espy,
One half the world direct their eyes aloft.
Open and shut, and shut and open oft
The opal gates, and then wide open fly,
When rosy, like Aurora, she comes down.
Beside her, on her car, Hygeia sits,
With chamomile and gentian for her crown ;
And round, in light attire, gay Iris flits,
Enshrining, but not veiling from our view,
Spring's dimpling smiles and robes of emerald hue.

VIII.

TO SPRING.

II.

HAIL, gentle Spring ! before thy fragrant breath
Hoar Winter, jealous, scowls and looks aghast ;
Then down he stoops, and gathers up right fast
His cold white gear, like garniture of death,
And flings it o'er his shoulder and decamps.
The green hills lift their heads, Vertumnus tramps
Bold through the woods, and bids the beeches cast
Their russet robes, and don their green at last,
To welcome Flora ; who comes tripping on,
Smiling with joy, and from her basket throws,
On dell and mead, the cowslip and primrose,
And violets drops by every moss-clad stone.
Auspicious Nymph ! ev'n the old beggarman
Now feels 'tis Spring, and glads him as he can.

IX.

SPRING.

III.

O 'TIS a gladdening sight indeed to see
The earth put on her mantle of bright green !
Mountain and valley glittering in their sheen,
And twinkling every leaf on every tree !
I hear the Oak shout out, "Look, look at me !"
"At thee," the Ash replies, "what dost thou mean ?
I'm at my tiring, and will soon be seen."
"Yes, yes," the Birches cry, "and here are we !"
Rings every grove with melody around ;
Echo starts up and gives again the sound.
The robin-redbreast, who the winter long
Trill'd from the leafless bough his little lay,
Now stops his pipe, knowing full well his song
Is all too plaintive for so bright a day.

X.

TO SPRING.

IV.

HAIL, gentle Spring ! although thy voice no more
Thrills through my soul as in my own life's spring,
When all the songs which made the woodlands ring,
Which thy small ministers from trees did pour,
Seemed less the utterance of their joy than mine.
Ere yet I felt like one on the lone shore
Of some far distant land, who, thinking o'er
The joys of other days, with eyes with brine
Bedewed years for his home, and heaves a sigh,
For there the ocean, like eternity,
Stretches away ! O, gentle Spring, although
Thy voice to me is as a memory,
I love thee still, for all too well I know
It is not thou, alas ! art changed, but I !

XI.

TO THE THRUSH.

O THRUSH, that sittest on that snow-white pear,
Giving the key-note to the vernal quire!
When wilt thou cease? or wilt thou never tire
Twirling away, discoursing in the air?
O stop that song of thine, or I must tear
Myself away, for I cannot respire
While thou keep'st running up and down thy lyre,
And wilt not rest, nor finish anywhere.
We surely err in deeming thee a thrush :
Thou art some soul escaped its mortal coil,—
Some fair young soul, come back to earth to hush
Our idle fears, and be to Death a foil ;
Asking the wretched why they mourn for thee,
Whose life is like thy song, all ecstasy.

XII.

TO THE COWSLIP.

'Tis summer tide, for on the verdant lawn,
In number numberless, where'er we tread,
The yellow Cowslip hangs its modest head,
Like some coy maiden in life's opening dawn,
Now conscious of her charms ; whose downcast look
Heightens that beauty she would seek to hide.
Sweet flower ! to all thou bringest summertime :
To me much more ; for thou art as a brook
In which my own life's summer I still view ;
When mere existence could all things imbue
With bright and glowing colours ; when to cast
Myself among thy sweets was ecstasy ;
When I ne'er thought of Future nor of Past,
The Scylla and Charybdis of life's sea.

XIII.

TO OUR LADY'S SMOCK.

OUR Lady's Smock ! When on thy leaflets white,
With lilac tinged, I gaze, methinks I see
Some gentle maid (for gentle she must be
Who in fair Flora's wildlings takes delight)
Stoop down and pluck thee ; with thy purity
And linen whiteness struck : then with a bright
And beaming eye, the little devotee
Hies off in haste to the old eremite :
“ Would our dear Lady deign,” she says at shrift,
“ To take this for a smock ? ” He, knowing well
How much the affections are impressible
By what is beautiful, accepts the gift.
'Tis thus the lowliest flower that blooms may leaven
The heart with love, and lead the soul to Heaven.

XIV.

TO THE BEE.

Ho ! little trumpeter, with tiny horn,
That brushest past my ear in vocal May,
Gathering honey from each flower and spreÿ ;
The garden skimming now, and now the corn,
Thou art the happiest thing on earth that's borne !
Where'er thou listest thou art free to stray,
For no one misses what thou tak'st away ;
And walls and fences are thy perfect scorn.
There's not a flower that blooms but thou dost rifle,
A welcome plunderer. Is it the rose ?
It folds thee in its leaves : the harebell light ?
It bends its head, and approbation shows.
With the snapdragon even thou dar'st trifle,
And dashing down its throat, again tak'st flight.

XV.

THE CUCKOO.

HARK ! the Cuckoo ! and hark again ! cuckoo !
Though but two notes its diapason reach,
A thousand chords it strikes and vibrates through,
Within my heart, in unison with each :
Yea, to my soul it is as summer dew,
Reviving sympathies and feelings which
I thought were stranded on the world's rough beach ;
And Memory in her cells reviving too.
Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! What magic's in the sound !
Until I hear it, Summer is not crowned.
How through the very inmost soul it thrills !
What pleasing, soothing, softening thoughts instills !
Sunshine through shadow, youth through manhood gleams,
And health, faint flickering long, a moment beams.

XVI.

SUMMER.

I.

Now to the uplands gentle Spring withdraws ;
And ardent Summer with a youthful band
Of sylvan nymphs, by soft Favonius fanned,
Comes on reluctant, making frequent pause.
Attired in robe of gossamer-like gauze,
Holding a snow-white lily in her hand,
Slowly she comes, with which as with a wand
The ruffian winds afar she charms or awes.
Chaplets of roses round her head are wreathed,
And softest airs by tuneful flutes are breathed.
Smiling she comes with all her sylvan charge,
Graceful and girlish, yet mature the while ;
Like Cleopatra in her gorgeous barge
Skimming the dreamy waters of the Nile.

XVII.

TO SUMMER.

II.

How glorious art thou, Summer, in thy prime,
As now I see thee, when aside is thrown
Spring's Hebe form for woman's swelling zone !
When all the charms of Andalusia's clime
Are blended with the freshness of our own,
And melody and fragrance round are strewn !
Close by the pen the shepherd and his lass
Lean on their crooks, their flocks already shorn ;
With undulating motion waves the corn,
As if an earthquake underneath did pass :
The cows, large-uddered, stand knee-deep in grass ;
And Plenty fills her deep capacious horn.
Now would I lay me by some streamlet's brink,
And gaze, and muse, and dream, and scarcely think.

XVIII.

SUMMER.

III.

Now would I lay me 'neath some willow grey,
Or gnarled oak, hard by the gushing stream,
And see the blue sky through the foliage gleam,
Mottling the mossy sward; where, dancing gay,
Sunshine and shadow with each other play :
Giving a twilight tone to all things round ;
The mind, too, predisposing in each sound
To hear the voice of Oriad or of Fay.
The vexed oak groans, I start, and through the trees
See in yon old oak stump a Satyr sit ;
Above, I hear a rustling of the breeze,
And see a Dryad 'mong the branches flit ;
In the deep pool I hear a sudden plash,
And see a Naiad through the hazels dash.

XIX.

TO OUR LADY'S MANTLE.

OUR Lady's Mantle ! When I musing stray
In leafy June along the mossy sward,
No flower that blooms more fixes my regard
Than thy green leaf, though simple its array ;
For thou to me art as some minstrel's lay,
Depicting manners of the olden time,
When on Inch Cailliach's isle the convent chime
Summoned to Vespers at the close of day.
'Tis pleasant 'mid the never-ending strife
Of this too busy, mammon-loving age,
When Nature's gentler charms so few engage,
To muse at leisure on the quiet life
Of earlier days, when every humble flower
Was known to all, and cherished as a dower.

XX.

TO OUR LADY'S SLIPPER.

OUR Lady's Slipper! On the mountain's brow,
On verdant meadow, or by streamlet's brink;
In wold or dell, or in the rocky chink,
No flower has had more votaries than thou;
Lowly albeit thou art. Beauties enow
Thou in thyself possessest; but the pink
Of all is in thy name: this is a link
That knits thee ev'n to those who disallow
Our Lady's claims. Gone are her palmy days;
No more as worshippers we consecrate
Things beautiful to her: but who can gaze
Upon this little flower, nor for her fate
Feel pity? such a pity as we own
When thinking of a mother who is gone!

XXI.

TO THE SWAN.

PURE, snow-white bird, that skimm'st the tranquil tide,
With swelling bosom, and long arching neck,
And stopp'st anon thyself to preen and deck
In thy lake mirror, where thou calm dost glide,
With naught but whim or fancy for thy guide !
Tell me what does thine attitudes inspire :
Is it thine own fair image to admire ?
Or art thou conscious that by me thou'rt spied ?
Most graceful bird, thou art the very type
Of rural elegance : the crowd, remote
Thou fleest still ; but where the shepherd's pipe
Is heard by Lomond's isles, where, like thyself
In miniature, white water-lilies float,
There thou art seen disporting like an elf !

XXII.

TO THE KINGFISHER.

HAIL, little gay recluse, that lov'st to sit
On storm-bleached stumps and stones by the lake side,
Watching the shoals of minnows as they glide,
Or mottled par, that sometimes past thee flit !
Thy splendid livery thee might well befit
As page to some fair Naiad of the tide ;
But yet approached thou soon thy perch dost quit,
And wilt not let thy beauty be descried.
Most strange it seems that Nature should bestow
Plumage so rare on bird so rarely seen !
Thus man would in his wisdom fondly ween,
Who thinks all things are made for him below :
But are there not Intelligences high,
Who what is beautiful on earth espy ?

XXIII.

SUMMER MORNING.

EYE never looked upon a scene more fair,
Save in a dream, or in the Golden Age :
The mountain tops as on an embassy
To Heaven appear (like priests who may repair
Unblamed to the high altar) in the air
At home, the empyrean air ! The trees
In leafy stoles, wooing in vain the breeze
That sleeps, stand breathless as a soul at prayer.
The lake too sleeps from shore to island knoll,
Where all these beauties clear redoubled lie ;
Yea, Heaven and earth are blended into one,
For deep within the water rests the sky !
Gazing on such a scene o'erwhelms the soul;
It thinks, and must be sad: this sin hath done.

XXIV.

TO THE PEACOCK.

MAGNIFICENT bird ! whether with measured tread
And long depending train, such as of yore,
In velvet or brocade, our grandams wore
On gala days, when they to tourneys sped,
Thou strutt'st ; or to Favonius dost expand
Thy broad circumference like a fan outspread,
Or like an Iris fair embodied,
Where Argus' hundred eyes in azure stand ;
'Tis clear the fabulous legend thou dost know
Of Juno and thyself, so proud thy look.
But still I think thee beautiful ; for though
In lovely woman we can hardly brook
A consciousness of beauty, yet in thee,
Proud bird, it is a thing we like to see.

XXV.

SUMMER EVENING.

(ADDRESSED TO RICHMOND AND EUPHEMIA.)

THERE are some evenings which we ne'er forget,
Albeit than others not more beautiful,
But which some talisman with mystic tool
In Memory's tablet silently will set;
And this is one. The flowers with dew all wet,
That late were drooping round my rustic stool;
The burning day remembered, but now cool;
And lofty Ben, like Night, one mass of jet:
Low on the hills, the skies of saffron hue,
Changing to sapphire where the stars they meet;
Trees in full foliage, lake of gleaming blue;
Birds singing, and flocks nibbling at our feet:
But more than all th' affection of ye two,
Than skies, or dews, or songs, or flowers more sweet.

XXVI.

TO THE GLOW-WORM.

BRIGHT Glow-worm, hail, that sheddest thy soft ray
At dewy Evening from the mossy bank,
When pimpernels no more the meadows prank,
But close their eyelids with the close of day !
The stars are beautiful, but lead astray
Too often those whom as the wise we rank ;
The Mighty Architect whom stars obey,
Is in the sage's eyes sometimes a blank.
But not so thou, thou mimic Evening Star !
Thou ledest none astray ; and the vain fears
Gently remov'st of such as lowly are.
“ Can God,” they ask, “ who rules the starry spheres,
Deign to regard weak man ? ” That Power divine
Which lights the stars makes even the Glow-worm shine.

XXVII.

TO THE CUSHAT DOVE.

I LOVE at twilight's mystic hour to sit
On the smooth-shaven lawn in solitude,
Listening thy note, sweet dove, within the wood,
What time the bat, the swallow's counterfeit,
Night's tiny herald, first begins to flit ;
For then thou giv'st the key-note to my musing;
My thoughts, howe'er disturbed, moulding and fusing,
Till with thine own harmoniously they fit.
What ails thee, that thou ceasest not to coo ?
Has thy kind mate beneath the gos-hawk bled ?
Good cause hast thou to wail, if this be true ;
But not like man, who holds erect his head,
For he, alas ! not only mourns the dead,
But, in his fears, ofttimes the living too.

XXVIII.

TWILIGHT.

How strange is the analogy between
Man's seeming long, yet little pilgrimage
Of feverish life on this eventful stage,
And the Sun's circuit through the blue serene !
All have remarked it since the world hath been,
So obvious is it ; yet it strikes me most,
Yea startles me, in Twilight, when at e'en
Alone I sit, in contemplation lost.
The day declines apace, but ere it fades
A short bright glimmer all the air pervades ;
Before man passes from his anxious strife,
A placid smile oft o'er his features flits :
Light in the one, and in the other life,
We fondly deem, yet both but counterfeits !

XXIX.

MOONLIGHT.

WE prize a Canaletti : we do well ;
For who like he could made a moonbeam sleep
Upon the canvas, and at mid-day steep
The soul in night, and keep us 'neath its spell ?
But, oh ! on Cynthia's self at night to dwell,
As from the blue serene she looks abroad,
Or 'mid the clouds that hurry on pell mell,
As bent on her destruction, wades unawed !
Shedding the clouds in twain, and scattering wide,
Yet beautifying what she turns aside !
Night after night she lays her beauty bare,
Hanging a Canaletti in the sky,
Immense, yet beautiful as gem most rare :
And yet we pass her all unheeded by !

XXX.

TO A PAIR OF WATER-WAGTAILS,

WHICH BUILT THEIR NEST ON THE CLEMATIS GROWING ON OUR HOUSE.

HAIL, gentle friends ! for friends ye surely were,
Who played your little pranks before my eyes ;
Whose house-top gambols filled me with surprise,
While sitting musing in my rustic chair.
And oft I wondered what could bring you there,
And if ye were not spirits in disguise,
Who loved to dwell on former memories,
Though now the happy tenants of the air.
And oft I wondered if ye were old friends
Who knew me well, although to me unknown ;
And then I thought how best to make amends
For any want of courtesy once shown.
Thus pleasantly with you I wiled away
The summer hours, and now the wintry day.

XXXI.

THE GLEDE.

HIGH overhead the Glede ascending soars ;
Stops short, a moment flutters on the wing,
Himself in his air-cradle balancing ;
Then rests, as rests the shallop on its oars.
How danger he delights in, or ignores !
'Tis dreadful to conceive of living thing
Hanging as 'twere upon earth's outmost ring,
Where voice is none, save when the thunder roars.
Should his wing falter in that giddy height,
No resting-place is there, no help—he dies.
I dare no longer gaze upon the sight ;
I shudder even to think of his emprise :
So feels not he, for now a bolder flight
He meditates, and launches in the skies.

XXXII.

TO THE LINDEN-TREE.

IN balmy May the Linden-tree puts on
Her citron vesture, delicately bright,
What time the poplar ceases to invite
All eyes to gaze on it, its fragrance gone ;
And when the branches like a mighty fan
Wave to and fro, the pendant blossoms swell
Like blobs of honey dropping from the cell ;
Look up, and count the clusters if ye can
And listen to the never-ending hum
Of honey-bees in myriads there that come !
When frost-winged tempests howl in Hallow-tide,
A skeleton thou standest, Linden-tree ;
Thy graceful foliage scattered far and wide ;
Preaching to beauty a sad homily.

XXXIII.

LAMMASTIDE.

I.

Look up! the heather is at last in bloom!
The mountains' brows like amethyst appear;
Already, hanging heavy in the ear,
The fields of corn their golden tinge assume;
The meadow-queen gives out her rich perfume;
His crimson vest the sycamore doth wear,
And round about us, blythe as a bridegroom,
Gay larks, and they alone, sing everywhere;
And all betokens mellow Autumn's birth.
Hail, bounteous Autumn! thou who dost disperse
Gaunt famine's fears, and makest glad the hearth,
All hail!—but yet when I bethink me, scarce
Can I rejoice, or feel unmingled mirth,
For Autumn's cradle must be Summer's hearse.

XXXIV.

LAMMASTIDE.

II.

SEASON succeeds to season, each aside
The other pushing with such gentle force,
That ere we know it, Spring has run her course ;
And Summer's emblems one by one have died,
Ere we are conscious of the sad divorce.
The primroses, where are they ? and the pride
Of the green lawn, the cowslips ? Where the gorse,
Loading the air with odours far and wide ?
The violets where, and hyacinths so blue ?
The daisies where, that welcomed the cuckoo ?
All these are gone ; yet while were left behind
The roses and the lilies, none repined ;
But these now shed their blossoms, and naught left,
We feel at last we are indeed bereft.

XXXV.

ON FIRST NOTICING THE AUTUMNAL TINTS ON A
BIRCH-TREE.

WHAT yellow thing is that which rears its head
Amid the oaks, that still are green as spring ?
Is it the Birch ? is Summer on the wing ?
And unperceived are all her glories fled ?
O thou Birch-tree ! I've loved thee till this day,
But thou hast waked me from a pleasant dream :
I thought it summer still, nor marked that lay
Of thrush and blackbird, and the peacock's scream
Were heard no more, and that the fields were gay
With fruits, not flowers ; yea, I did fondly deem
The withered herbage on the mountain side,
Red with the sun, was still the heather-bell ;
When in an evil hour thy leaves I spied,
And starting, heard all round sweet Summer's knell.

XXXVI.

AUTUMN.

I.

Now sober Autumn with her empty wain,
A sickle in her hand, and on her head
Clusters of burnished nuts and rowans red,
With matron look comes walking o'er the plain :
A bevy of young maidens in her train,
The lighter labours of the field to share ;
Whose playful mirth and movements debonair
Sweeten the toils of the enamoured swain.
The mill now stands, the shuttles cease to fly ;
Her broider-work the cottage-girl lays by ;
The humming wheel of matron is not heard ;
Vulcan no more the swinging hammer wields :
But young and old, eager, with one accord
Rush to the reapers in the rustling fields.

XXXVII.

TO AUTUMN.

II.

HAIL, yellow Autumn! though I see embossed
With auburn foliage, dropping fast away,
Thy voiceless woods, predictive of decay;
And in the feathered migratory host,
That through the fields of air incessant post,
The quire that comes thee funeral rites to pay,
And sing thy dirge, that heralds into day
Old hoary Winter, breathing hail and frost!
'Tis good for man to mark the withered leaf
Drop from the tree, and meditate at times
On these winged visitants from other climes,
Whose sojourn here is as his own but brief;
And in the ceaseless rustling of the sere
And yellow leaves "Memento mori" hear.

XXXVIII.

TO AUTUMN.

III.

HAIL, yellow Autumn ! though thou art not now,
As once, my favourite season. It requires
The buoyancy of soul which youth inspires,
To love to see the leaves drop from the bough,
The withered leaves ; and the relentless plough
Turn o'er the sward ; while curlews, whistling shrill,
Sing Nature's requiem on the mountain's brow,
And all the air is as blue marble, still.
It was a kind of triumph once to see
All Nature die, and find myself at ease
In youth, that seemed an immortality :
But I am changed now, and feel with trees
A brotherhood, and in their obsequies
Think of my own. Thus Time hath wrought with me.

XXXIX.

TO THE CURLEW.

HARK, the Curlew ! How sweetly wild its note !
Wisely, dear bird, the busy world thou fliest,
Building thy nest upon the moor that's highest,
From danger and disturbance far remote ;
Where sheep are bleating by the wattled cote,
Cropping all day the purple heather-bell ;
Where grows the orchis and bright asphodel,
And cloudberries on which young urchins dote.
There thou dost live, and rear thy tender brood,
Till leafy July comes in all her pride,
When on this nether world, thou, careful guide,
For a short space dost venture to intrude,
To show them dangers it is wise to fly :
Instructive bird, as thou liv'st, so would I !

XL.

BIRDS NATURE'S BEST INTERPRETERS.

BIRDS are mute Nature's best interpreters ;
Deep read are they in all her mysteries.
Ere seer or wizard Summer's flight describes,
She's mourned in silence by these worshippers :
Ere from the yellow woods a leaf yet stirs,
They see grim Winter gathering in the skies ;
And mute no more, with instinct that ne'er errs,
They sing meek Autumn's dirge before she dies.
Hark, the wood-pigeon ! how she mournful coos,
Albeit no urchin now disturbs her nest !
How the sweet robins tenderness transfuse
Into those notes which warmed Spring's fitful gleam
How through the sky the curlew wails distressed !
And hark ! at night the bittern's hollow scream !

XLI.

THE ROWAN TREE.

'Tis beautiful, 'tis wonderful to see
(And stamps them with an origin divine)
Through all her works how Nature does combine
With what is beautiful, utility ;
How things that unconnected seem, agree !
In Spring, the Rowan her cream-coloured flowers
Flings in the lap of May, and fragrance showers ;
And soon on every blossom hangs a bee !
We revel in these sweets ; then ere we know,
They shed their beauties and on every twig
Rich coral clusters hang, glossy and big,
Weighing the wearied branches down, when lo !
Thither strange birds to banquet now repair,
Coming we know not whence, going we know not where !

XLII.

THE DEAD PHEASANT.

How beautiful is Nature in her strife
To shield the young and helpless from all harm,
Till they can venture forth without alarm !
Yet having reared, how lavish of their life !
Giving the bleating people to the knife ;
And to the gun, for sport, and naught beside,
The feathery tribes ; till violence is rife,
And earth one bloody altar far and wide.
How strange to think with what assiduous care
This bird was reared, with what affection rare !
Till, fully fledged, the parent nest it fled,
In life exulting, through the woods to dash
Radiant in beauty : when, behold ! a flash !
And lo ! the elegant creature lieth dead.

XLIII.

TO THE ROBIN-REDBREAST.

COME, pretty Robin, to my window sill,
And take some crumbs, for I have heard thy pipe
Well pleased of late, and now that Winter's gripe
Must pinch thee, I would pay thee for thy trill :
Come, for I fain would see thy tiny bill,
Thy arch black eye, thy breast like apple ripe,
Thy little bunchy self, who art the type
Of cheerfulness, let come to thee what will.
Thou art no murmurer like the slaves of pelf ;
Thou seest, disconsolate, the wintry day,
And eye'st askance the larder's well-stored shelf,
Fast locked secure, yet on thy leafless spreyn
Thou find'st a kingdom in thy little self,
And ever and anon trill'st out thy lay.

XLIV.

TO THE SCOTTISH FIR.

(ON SEEING A FINE SPECIMEN.)

STOUT, sturdy veteran in a hale old age !
Give thee but mountain air and verge enough,
There waves no tree more fitted to engage
Affection, though thy outward man be gruff.
In vain the winds against thee warfare wage,
Thy boughs, like iron-rusted timbers rough,
Sport with their wrath ; 'tis then thou show'st thy stuff ;
And greenest thou when Winter walks the stage !
But man for selfish ends plants thee in clumps ;
Thou pin'st, and show'st no verdure save atop,
The wintry winds thy withered branches lop,
Leaving thy scraggy stem deformed with stumps ;
And then he calls thee an unsightly tree :
With what injustice, viewing thee, I see !

XLV.

EARLY FROST.

(ADDRESSED TO RICHMOND.)

RICHMOND! this is a bright and lovely day :
The lake, blue as the Rhone, thy own loved Rhone,
Smiles in the sun ; the coverlet is gone,
Which like a shroud upon the landscape lay,
And pearly dew-drops hang on every spray :
His freshest green the laurel has put on ;
And, save the stillness that prevails, the tone
Of all we gaze on is as Summer gay.
The scene is gay, but all my spirits fail,
And Nature never looked to me so dull.
“For shame,” thou’lt say, “to vex me with this tale,
When I’m from home, and my own heart is full.”
But patience, ’tis thy absence makes me sad ;
And so my sorrow makes my Richmond glad.

XLVI.

ON A NEST EXPOSED TO VIEW AT MARTINMAS.

WHAT food for thought that little Nest supplies,
Now all distraught, and full exposed to view,
With cold November rain soaked through and through,
Within whose bowl the snow-flake falls, and lies !
Where now the bird that warmed it with its breast ?
And where the brood that loved to be caressed ?
Ah ! well for them, now scattered far and wide,
Their nestling joys are not remembered more !
Ah ! well it is, that Nature has denied
To them the power the future to explore !
Not so the wretch with poverty beset,
Childless and houseless in the vale of years ;
Her present sufferings are her least regret,
If back she looks, she sighs, if forward, fears.

XLVII.

ON RECEIVING AN AURICULA FROM RICHMOND
AT HALLOWTIDE.

I.

How shall I speak thee, thou autumnal gem,
To my sick chamber a most welcome prize ?
For in my breast conflicting feelings rise
While holding in my hand thy velvet stem,
And crimped corolla with its crimson hem ;
Or peering steadfast in thy yellow eyes,
From which the pollen, as I twirl thee, flies ;
Whose clustered flowers make a fair diadem.
Surprise I feel commingling with delight,
To see a vernal flower now blossoming ;
Yet sadness comes across me like a blight,
That thou should'st be so drooping, like a thing
Born out of time, or some unearthly sprite ;
And all unlike the vigorous child of Spring.

XLVIII.

ON RECEIVING AN AURICULA FROM RICHMOND
AT HALLOWTIDE.

II.

But fresh, or drooping, I will cherish thee,
And taste thy fragrant breath even while I may ;
Once more a child, I'll revel on to-day,
Nor trust to-morrow, that may never be :
For who can tell if he the Spring shall see ;
Or see it with a spirit light and gay ?
He cannot tell whose pulses vigorous play,
Who like the mountain deer can wander free ;
Far less can I in such fond visions share,
Who long imprisoned on a couch have pined,
Needing my Richmond's sympathy and care ;
Whose love did prompt her to brave rain and wind,
To search the garden through for something rare,
And cull for me what none but she could find.

XLIX.

ON RECEIVING A RED AND A WHITE ROSE AT
MARTINMAS.

I.

LAST gleanings of the garden, tell me why
So late a day you've put your blossoms forth,
Your sweets withholding till the sullen North
Has drawn his leaden curtains o'er the sky,
And Summer long has laid her down to die ;
When fittest flowers are those that owe their birth
To the industrious fair, who round the hearth
The shining needle on the canvass ply.
Is it to pay the robin, as a look
He casts into the garden, for his song ?
Or feed some bee who hunger cannot brook ?
Some honey bee, whose stores the Summer long
Man eager watched within its straw-thatched nook,
And, Winter coming, perpetrates the wrong !

L.

ON RECEIVING A RED AND A WHITE ROSE AT
MARTINMAS.

II.

I KNOW not why you've braved the wintry wind,
These frozen snows and unpropitious skies,
But for yourselves your choice has been most wise,
For in my garland you shall be entwined ;
And who can tell but some day I may bind
You in a crimson volume of neat size,
And like the amaranth immortalise ;
Thus making up for all these blasts unkind !
If for yourselves your choice has happy been,
O ! I have found a monitor in ye,
Lifting my soul to Him, who, though unseen,
Paints every flower ; who painted these for me,
Softening my heart the while that I might lean
On Him, in every thing His hand might see.

LI.

WINTER.

I.

CRACKS the thick-ribbed ice at the black poles,
And hoary Winter, on a massy drift
With sealskins covered, issues from the rift.
He comes—attendant on him vasty shoals
Of huge leviathans, with their young foals,
And mounting his swift sled, horsed by a troop
Of polar bears, with lightning-wingèd swoop
O'er continent-converted ocean bowls.
Boreas before, behind him Eurus flies,
Sounding their awful shells, that rend the skies.
With breath congealed upon his bosom bare,
Hanging in icicles, the Sire is seen,
Sturdy and stout, but yet of gracious mien ;
Kindly though cold, benignant though severe.

LII.

TO WINTER.

II.

HAIL, hoary Winter! How they thee traduce
Who call thee hideous, gloomy, surly, vile!
I feel compunctious visitings, erewhile
That with the herd I joined in thy abuse.
In thy best mood, how beautiful art thou!
Earth's lap all glittering, glittering all her hills;
Her trees with hoary foliage bending low;
Blue skies, snow wreaths, crisp rills, and icicles:
And then o' nights what million stars us greet!
Ev'n in thy wrath I love thee. Rain! hail! sleet
O how ye make the crackling faggots burn!
But, Winter, my poor homage thou dost spurn,
Pointing to many an Alp, I see thee laugh,
And hear thee say, "Behold my cenotaph!"

LIII.

TO WINTER.

III.

AND yet, O hoary Winter ! when I know
How the small birds sit cowering on the trees
The long night through, nipt by the biting breeze
How the poor sheep are wandering to and fro
On the hill side, or smothering in the snow ;
How the furred fox lies shivering in his den,
And the wild roe looks wistful to the pen,
Out-hungered of her fears of man, her foe :
And meet the village poor, infirm and bent,
Looking for firewood by the neighbouring lodge ;
And lagging youngsters on like errand sent,
Blowing their hands to warm them as they trudge :
I needs must think thee stern, when this I see,
And sighing wonder why it so should be.

LIV.

WINTER EVENING.

I.

Now ring the bell, let's close the shutters in ;
And, Richmond dear, you know where you excel,
Come, stir the fire—not quite so much—that's well :
Now play “ O, Nannie,” but ere you begin,
Maria, ring again, for with this din
The wind is making, I suspect before
They had not heard us. How the rain does pour !
I hear the lake as if 'twere Cora-linn.
Whistles the wind as if 'twould burst outright :
Look out and see what blackness in the skies !
There's not a glimmer ! 'tis a fearful night ;
And when it lulls, hear how the bittern cries !
And people out ! and sheep ! Euphemia, dear,
Hand Shakspeare over, I will read you “ Lear.”

LV.

WINTER EVENING.

II.

Now shut the door, while Charles the curtain draws,
And brings the candles in : make all things snug ;
Wheel round the sofa ; and while on the rug,
Sitting contented, Tabby wets her paws,
Washing her face, and purring, pleased, applause,
We'll welcome Evening in—But stop, a lyre
Has Evening sung with never-dying fire,
Admonishing me gently here to pause.
Cowper, I owe thee much ! thou didst me teach
Thy pure fireside enjoyments to prefer,
The world's rough pleasures still within my reach ;
These now removed, unless I greatly err,
My fireside tastes and fireside lot unite.
Ah ! that thy mantle too might on me light !

LVI.

NIGHT.

Now Night attires herself in sable hood,
Through the damp pitchy air, dim-seen, to walk,
While injured ghosts (as some imagine) stalk
The earth abroad, portending nothing good,
And the horned owl hoots ominous in the wood.
The jewel sockets in her crown are blank,
Her tangled tresses hang about her lank,
And her black stole is over all bedewed.
She holds a lantern in her chilly hand,
And walks like one a precipice who nears.
Look ! look ! she stops to satisfy her fears,
And moves again, and then again does stand !
Her countenance demure she hardly shows,
And, wrapt in thought, all unattended goes.

LVII.

VALEDICTORY.

THE Heathen bards to their divinities,
Pallas Athena, Phœbus, mightiest Zeus,
To dedicate their lays did not refuse,
For they were earnest men, although unwise,
And had firm faith in their false deities.
But we, (what shall we offer in excuse?)
O shame! whom God with more ennobling views
Has blessed, who makes the true light to arise,
From deference to the world, or pride, or shame,
Or latent unbelief, withhold his name.
O Christ! shall it be said that I have swept
The lyre, nor named thy name in all my strain?
Thou who the box of spikenard didst accept,
And even the widow's mite didst not disdain?

SONNETS,

SUGGESTED BY RECOLLECTIONS OF A TOUR.

I.

ON FIRST HEARING THE NIGHTINGALE.

O NIGHTINGALE, sweet troubadour of night !
Though Eve her glow-worm lamp has not yet trimmed,
Ner Ave-Mary from yon tower been hymned,
That note is thine, which, laden with delight,
Starts from the thicket, as a meteor bright
Floats through the vault; for all that poets tell,
Of love and rapture inexpressible,
With melancholy mingled, there unite.
I'll come and hear thee when the garish Day
Disturbs thee not within thy leafy bower,
But yields his empire to Night's gentle sway,
When melody is felt in all its power :
This is the mere rehearsal of thy lay,
The first prelusive drops before the shower.

II.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

SHY Nightingale, that singest till the East
Sends forth Aurora with her rosy feet,
Filling the soul with melody so sweet,
We think we hear it still, when it has ceased !
O surely thou art Laura's little priest,
To whom she hies, her secrets to repeat ;
For as her bosom does with gladness beat,
Or sadness, so thy song is gay, or triste.
Last night, when we stood listening to thy lay,
She laughed, and said, what fools these poets were,
To tells us that thy juggling is not gay ;
And, she beside me, I agreed with her :
But now that she is absent, thou dost mourn
With me, and singest ever on, "Return."

III.

ROME.

AND do I stand in very deed in Rome?
In fallen Rome? her temples overthrown,
Her triumphs past, and all her glory gone;
The cradle once of art, but now the tomb.
And have I on the Capitoline clomb?
Or is it but a vision I see gleam?
For, sooth to say, one need not sleep to dream,
While gazing on the Pantheon's awful dome;
Or his, who in the azure concave dwells
With his ten satellites, that on him wait;
The Coliseum huge, from whose dread cells
The gladiator rushed upon his fate,
And played the game of death; whose gaping walls
Seem as a mouth that still for murder calls.

IV.

ON WOOLLET'S ENGRAVING,

FROM A PAINTING BY CLAUDE, OF ROMAN EDIFICES IN RUINS ; THE
ALLEGORICAL EVENING OF THE EMPIRE.

I'VE gazed at evening's tranquillising hour
On this most touching, soul-subduing scene,
So beautifully bright, yet so serene ;
Where the sun's rays fall in a golden shower
Upon a nation's sepulchre—on tower,
Temple, and arch, with influence benign,
And felt, O Rome ! that as a woman's power
Is in her tears, so in thy fall is thine.
'Tis so ; for who can gaze upon thee now
Nor weep ? And yet thou mad'st the nations bow
'Neath thy dread yoke, and wast thy people's scourge :
Thou knewest naught of Charity sweet-voiced.
O when fierce Alaric and his Goths thy dirge
Exulting sung, Humanity rejoiced !

V.

ON A ROOMY AND NEAT SWISS COTTAGE.

How sweet that cottage looks, with its broad eaves
And roomy gallery! and what an air
Of real substantial happiness is there,
With neatness, too, combined! where 'mid dark leaves,
Like countless stars, the jasmine blossoms shine,
And honeysuckles round the bee-hives twine.
Would that there were no palaces on earth!
Would that there were no hovels! 'Neath this roof
No haughty lordling lives, keeping aloof
From his own kind, because of lower birth!
Nor squalid wretches, miserable, lurk,
Foredoomed for others ever on to toil:
No, here man lives, enjoying life the while,
And works to live, but does not live to work!

VI.

TO THE RHONE, AT ITS JUNCTION WITH THE
ARVE.

I.

BLUE, arrowy Rhone, whose pure, translucent stream,
By Leman's copious fountains ever fed,
Flows with a scarce heard whisper o'er its bed,
Where, dimly seen, deep down, white pebbles gleam
How oft hast thou supplied me with a theme
For meditation, when at eve I sped
Along thy banks, what time the bright sun shed
Upon thy glassy tide his sparkling beam :
And saw the horrid Arve come rolling down
From the cold mountains with resistless force ;
Obtruding on thy path, all foaming brown,
Like vice on innocence ; and, thy disgrace
Complete, saw thee pursue thy sullen course,
With Heaven no more reflected in thy face

VII.

TO THE RHONE, AT ITS JUNCTION WITH THE
ARVE.

II.

TRANSPARENT stream ! how I should mourn thy fate,
To think thy waters that come forth so clear
From Leman's lake, so soon must disappear
'Mong turbid waves, that for their coming wait ;
Did I not know that, ere it is too late
To save, the whispering tide will leave the shore,
Thee to thy pristine pureness to restore,
And bear thee sparkling in at ocean's gate !
Even as thy course, so is my life, swift stream !
Already I am stained with sin—deep dyed ;
'Mong turbid waves perhaps I long must swim.
O, will God's Spirit, like the ocean tide,
Come to my rescue with His still small voice,
That pure at last like thee I may rejoice ?

VIII.

ON THE LAKE OF ZURICH.

RICHMOND, dost thou remember Rapperschwil,
And the sweet banks of Zurich's lovely lake,
As on its bridge we leisurely 'gan wheel?
And how you trembled when you felt it shake?
How the old tower sent forth a merry peal,
Making the mountain echoes all awake?
And how the garden we could not forsake,
Till the moon rose night's glory to reveal?
Methinks even now I see the tiny tower,
With its mile-long, unparapetted bridge;
And in the lake, a thousand fathoms down,
Enshrined, reversed, its emerald mountain ridge:
And feel that earth has still an Eden left,
Nor is of Eden feelings all bereft.

IX.

TO MOUNT SENTIS.

HAIL, lofty Sentis ! I have gazed with awe
And wonder on thy brethren of the Alps,
In th' empyrean rearing their hoar scalps,
Magnificently pure without a flaw ;
But thee alone with that calm joy I saw
Which scarcely thrills, but o'er the bosom creeps,
That joy itself which never overleaps,
That knows not rapture, nor its after-thaw.
And why ? Because around thy temples blows
All unimpeded the free air of Heaven ;
No neighbouring Alp his shadow o'er thee throws,
With grandeur-tissued gloom the soul to leaven ;
Thick-studded at thy feet men's dwellings be,
And there is naught of loneliness in thee.

X.

MOUNT BLANC.

BUT chiefly thee, O sovran Blanc ! I greet,
Lifting thy head far up to dwell apart ;
Who seest Hyperion's coursers, ere they start,
Arching their necks and pawing with their feet ;
And latest seest his lessening wheels retreat :
Who with the streamers from the poles that dart,
And with the stars o' nights, familiar art,
Holding with them, as friends, communion sweet :
The clouds who seizest in the empyrean blue,
To robe thyself withal in their white folds,
Hurling them forth to pay thee homage due
As brooks, yea rivers, in thy piney wolds :
Whose vast snow fields, by Cynthia's light surveyed,
Seem Cynthia's self upon the earth low laid.

XI.

ON A CROSS

ERECTED AMONG THE HIGHER ALPS, TO MARK THE SPOT WHERE A
MURDER HAD BEEN COMMITTED.

WAS ever desolation seen like this ?
Can man imagine aught more savage wild ?
Rock upon rock in masses huge high piled ;
Some on the edge of the sheer precipice
Beetling in doubtful poise ! One's foot to miss
Were death. 'Tis fearful looking up ! and down,
More fearful still ; there torrents foaming brown,
Eager to lick us in, boil, roar, and hiss !
Stretching away a desert vast appears
Of loose debris, dusty, and dry, and black,
Where high his frozen ridge the Schreckhorn rears,
And the wind howls careering with the rack.
In such a place, good angels even might fear,
But man (dread thought !) can be a murderer here.

XII.

ON A VIOLET

BLOSSOMING WHERE A HORRID MURDER HAD BEEN PERPETRATED.

THESE roofless walls, black as a funeral pyre,
The blood-streaked bludgeon wrenched from those white
rails,

Mark this the place of murder and of fire,—

No sad survivor left. Nothing avails

In the agrarian fray, nor woman's wails,

Nor children's innocence, nor hoary sire,

To quench the rage of tiger-man ; all fails,

Mercy and ruth give place to vengeance dire.

This is a sorry spectacle, that leads

The mind astray, and thoughts bewildering breeds.

But see how beautiful beside those walls

That Violet is blooming on the sod !

Sweet flower ! that my uncertain thoughts recalls

From doubt and horror, and brings back to God.

XIII.

ON FIRST SEEING THE MONASTERY OF MARIA
EINSIEDELN,

SITUATED IN A REMOTE PART OF SWITZERLAND.

'Twas eventide in Summer's glorious prime,
When walking lonely, 'mong the Alpine chain,
I first beheld Einsiedeln's hallow'd fane,
In the pure air serene, majestic climb,
And heard her Ave Mary softly chime :
And lo ! ev'n while I gazed, along the plain
The monks walked forth, to bless the pilgrim train,
Who came from far to expiate their crime.
I then was but a stripling in my teens,
Delighting in all legendary lore ;
Imagination revelled in such scenes ;
Then judge my joy, to see what tales of yore
Of pilgrims, monks, and their dear Lady, taught,
Before me thus, all unexpected, brought !

XIV.

TO THE MEYER FAMILY, ST GALL.

DEAR friends, accept this tribute from his pen
Whose thoughts recur full often to St Gall,
And who the hearty kindness of you all
Delights to think of still, though summers ten
Twice told, and more, have glided past since then.
The sire's swart hair with grey is now rebuked ;
She who, though matron then, scarce matron looked,
Ere now looks something more ; the boys are men ;
And she who often sat upon my knee,
The little, black-eyed, gipsy-like Marie,
Who seemed to think the stranger did but live,
Her fairy form upon his foot to dance,
Is now a woman, and would blush to give
Those kisses, which unasked she gave him once.

XV.

WRITTEN AT THE CONVENT NEAR ST GALL.

I.

How sweet that valley, clothed in freshest green,
With its neat city ! whose white shining walls
And village-like circumference scarce recalls
The form of any city we have seen,
But looks like some small picture, so serene
And still it lies ! But hark ! the convent bell !
What strange emotions in the bosom swell !
And fair before, now doubly fair the scene.
Such magic's in a sound. The mind is stored
With images, requiring but a stroke,
Or gentlest touch, to vibrate at each chord,
And pleasurable feelings to evoke :
It is a prism, whose hues are undisclosed
Till acted on, and to its sun exposed.

XVI.

WRITTEN AT THE CONVENT NEAR ST GALL.

II.

OUR sweetest musings are delusions oft,
As baseless as night dreams, or as the bow
Spanning the heavens, which from afar a glow
Of beauty seems, radiant, at once, and soft,
Meet path for spirits when they pass aloft,
But ærial and unreal. To my young mind,
A convent brought up images refined
And beautiful, till, standing 'neath their loft,
I heard the sisters, gazing on the wall,
Repeat and re-repeat their weary drawl,
Which the damp vaults cast back as if in scorn ;
And learned that prayers ceased not, nor night nor day,
Nor had for ages ; when I turned away,
Lamenting over creatures so forlorn.

XVII.

ON THE DANUBE NEAR ITS SOURCE.

As one who gazes on a child whose look
Betokens promise, and whose bright career
Is seen without or augury or seer,
Even so I gaze upon this little brook,
Wimpling away from its sequestered nook ;
And view the river as he rolls along,
Through lands embalmed in history and song ;
Where peaceful now the reaper plies his hook.
I see the hero Sobieski come,
To quell the host that threatened Christendom :
The Roman, and the Greek, methinks, I see ;
The fiery Hun, the Dacian, vainly bold ;
The barbarous Cossack and fierce Osmanli :
Yes, for it is the Danube I behold !

XVIII.

TO THE RIVER NECKAR.

How oft thy margent green do I recall,
Sweet stream ! where we at eve were wont to stray,
Gath'ring the wild pinks at our feet that lay
On knoll and meadow, oversprinkling all ;
Oft sitting down to listen to the fall
Of thy pure waters as they gurgling leapt
From pool to pool, or 'mong the sedges tall,
With whispers soft as woman's, slowly crept.
There is a quiet beauty in thy banks
That never tires the mind : pleasing the more
To us, late wandering 'mid the Alpine ranks,
Rearing to Heaven their rugged summits hoar ;
Burdening the soul : a beauty, calm, not gay,
As Friendship is to Love, as eve to day.

XIX.

ON THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE QUEEN OF WUR-
TEMBERG, AT ROTHENBURG, NEAR CANSTADT,
ON WHICH IS INSCRIBED, "LOVE NEVER DIES!"

WHEN Fortune smiles, our state we fondly deem
Above humanity, and find a pleasure
In gilded baubles, thinking them a treasure,
And titles yield a phosphorescent gleam :
But when she lowers, things at their true esteem
Are rated ; adventitious honours then
Are naught ; an empty mockery they seem :
And princes when they mourn, must mourn as men.
This is the Mausoleum of a queen,
Whose titles full emblazoned may be seen
In heraldry ; these in her consort's eyes
Are nothing now, since fled the life of life :
He thinks but of the mother and the wife,
And writes upon her tomb, "Love never dies "

XX.

ON ENTERING FRANKFORT AFTER A LONG TOUR
THROUGH SWITZERLAND. 33

WHAT sense of loneliness comes o'er the soul,
What sinking of the spirits, when one leaves
The kindly-courteous country, and perceives
The first sure indications of his goal,
The densely-peopled city; when the roll
Of drums is heard in dry and dusty streets,
What time the huge cathedral bell repeats
The evening hour, with solemn-sounding toll!
Where 'mong the crowds that pour in at the gate,
There's none we care for, none for us who care!
How different from the scenes we left of late,
Where every peasant had a friendly air,
And where the trees, to touch us, wont to extend
Their branches out, like some familiar friend!

XXI.

ON REACHING ROTTERDAM,

AFTER A LONG TOUR THROUGH SWITZERLAND.

SOME moons I've wandered in a land of dreams,
(For one must dream when wandering all alone),
Constrained with man no fellowship to own,
Listening, by hills, and whispering woods, and streams,
To Nature's voice, who speaks not, when she deems
The crowd obtruding, but gives audience still,
As erst by Delphi's famous oracle,
To one alone; for such her state beseems.
Some moons I've wandered thus, and though I would
Fain sip still longer this ethereal dew,
Yet something tells me 'tis not wholesome food
For fallen man, even for the gifted few—
Far less for me; and that to work is good:
Then lakes, streams, woods, and mountains, all adieu!

XXII.

THE BOX-SEAT OF THE MAIL.

I.

How spirit-stirring, landing from abroad,
To take your seat upon the well-horsed mail,
What time the sapphire skies begin to pale,
And stars peep out, and bowl along the road,
In rural England, Liberty's abode !
No whiskered soldier giving you a hail,
To show your passport, or your trunk unbale ;
Those petty ills the temper that corrode.
To cast each object, as it comes in sight,
Behind you in the twinkling of an eye ;
And find the landscape round you, left and right,
That seemed one forest bounded by the sky,
When entered, fields of corn, all waving bright,
Where towns and villages unnumbered lie !

XXIII.

THE BOX-SEAT OF THE MAIL.

II.

NOR is the mind, as o'er the ground we fly,
To silent meditation indisposed,
When in the west her eyelids Eve has closed,
And star to star is speaking in the sky ;
When groves and woods, that we deem sleeping, lie
Listening at every pore ; and not a sound
Falls on the ear, save from the granges round,
Where trusty mastiffs bay security ;
Or where the nightingale, in some dark tree
Of thickest foliage hid, starts into song,
Then sudden stops ; whose sweetest melody
Pirouettes round us as we whirl along,
As if it were a thing that we might see ;
Then fades, and dies the upland woods among.

XXIV.

REGENT STREET, LONDON.

I.

HEAVENS! what a scene of splendour and of dash!
What seeming maze, and yet what perfect order!
We feel as if upon destruction's border
The crowd were treading; we have seen the flash,
And, breathless, look, expecting the loud crash;
Yet all moves on harmonious as the spheres:
Coach, chariot, cab, appears, and disappears,
And prancing horseman with gay plume and sash;
The lumbering dray with horses huge, the van,
And omnibusses—count them if you can!
Heavens, what a sight! and yet to ponder well,
The scene has less of grandeur than of gloom,
For, viewed aright, what is this spectacle?
What, but a vast procession to the tomb?

XXV.

REGENT STREET, LONDON.

II.

AWAY with all the tales good men devise,
(Good easy men, to their kind feelings dupes),
Of holes and hovels in which misery troops !
Away with all statistics—they are lies !
Can man misdoubt the witness of his eyes—
Believe that poverty and suffering dwell
Where old and young are streaming on pell-mell
To Circe's temple, eager votaries ?
It cannot be that mitred heads can loll
In cushioned chariots, drawn by pampered steeds ;
That woman, who her tears can scarce control
At Misery's tale, such flaunting follies heeds,
While thousands, near, are pining with disease,
Whom one kind look of sympathy would ease !

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

I.

TO THE OLD ASH-TREE IN BONHILL PARK,

WHICH IS BOUND WITH IRON, AND PROPPED UP WITH STAVES, TO
PREVENT IT FROM FALLING.

LAST remnant of the forest, whose compeers
Have long since fallen, nor left a trace behind !
Surveying thee, I pain, not pleasure find ;
Assured thyself, aweary of thy years,
Deplor'st thy friends' mistaken zeal, who bind
With iron girths thy weather-beaten rind,
And prop thy branches up with stave and pin,
To keep thy hollow trunk from falling in.
Too frail art thou for this rough stage of time,
And should'st have joined thy peers long, long ago ;
Thy stripling youth is past, thy vigorous prime,
Thy green old age, and what hast thou to show,
At this late day, but miserable eld,
With art, and all appliances upheld ?

II.

TO LEVEN WATER,

ON A RAILWAY BEING MADE ON ITS BANKS.

HAIL, gentle stream ! They tell me thou art changed,
That on thy banks no eglantine is seen,
Nor rural song of shepherd heard at e'en,
As when, a boy, thy tangled groves I ranged.
Affection knows no change, and will not know,
In her loved object ; she who day by day
Sits by the couch of sickness, sees not grow
Fainter and still more faint the pulse's play ;
Mistakes for coming health, the hectic glow,
Till nought is left but the cold lifeless clay :
Even so before my eyes, year after year,
Inroads were made upon thy rural fame,
But I ne'er saw them till the crisis came,
And then the change, alas ! was all too clear.

III.

TO ROSS DHU.

OFT when a stripling, thy sequestered coves,
Ross Dhu ! have I stole into with my shallop,
And, dashing quickly on, put to the gallop
The browsing kine within thy oaken groves ;
My feelings much akin to his who roves
Some new-discovered isle, at every sound,
Real or imagined, starting, as behoves
The boy who ventures on forbidden ground.
Unchallenged now I pass, but feel no more
Those exquisite delights I felt of yore,
When foresters and keepers in my sight
Were very satyrs, whom I sought to fly,
Yet wished to see ; for danger is delight,
And fear is one great element of joy !

IV.

TO BEN LOMOND.

As one long used by midnight lamp to pore
O'er hieroglyphic learning, and to stand
Spelling old marbles in this modern land,
To find the secret of Egyptian lore,
Betakes himself full-fraught to Nilus' shore,
And gazes, rapt, on tombs and temples vast,
To read the records of the mighty Past,
But soon despairs and gives his purpose o'er :
Ev'n so on thy magnificence years long
By day, by night, with rapture have I gazed,
O sovran Ben ! that my soul might be raised,
And all my feelings kindled into song :
But vain the wish, when I attempt the theme,
My thoughts escape in air, and I but dream.

V.

TO THE RIVER AWE.

O STREAM, that flows from Awe's isle-studded lake,
Whose heathery mountains high their summits rear,
How rapid is thy current, and how clear !
And what sweet murmurings thy pure waters make,
As if they were lamenting to forsake
Their granite urn, with precipices sheer
Begirt, from whose high peaks the antler'd deer
Look down, and eagles the far echoes wake.
No sluggish streams their turbid tribute bring
To thy pure tide ; and all in vain man tries
To stain thy bosom with impurities ;
These thou with indignation off dost fling ;
Reaching thy goal as pure as at thy source.
Ah, sparkling stream, that such were my own course !

VI.

TO KELVIN WATER.

SEQUESTERED stream ! I saw year after year
The noxious town expanding, street on street,
Blighting the rural charms of thy retreat,
Where whispering lovers, no intruders near,
Walked hand in hand ; where oft with stealthy feet
I hied along thy banks at morn, to hear
The small shrill wren, the Spring's reveillie beat :
And as a bird when robbed by driving sleet,
Or cruel imps, of half its fledglings dear,
Clings but the closer to the few still left,
So I to thee while one tree was uncleft ;
But every vestige of the forest gone,
Like the same bird when reft of all her brood,
Who pours her mournful ditty through the wood,
I sing thy dirge far off, and all alone.

VII.

TO THE OCEAN.

(WRITTEN ON THE SHORE OF BUTE.)

I.

WELCOME, old Ocean ! yet there was a time
Thy face to me was hateful, and the roar
Of thy white billows, dashing on the shore,
Ill-omened as the work-summoning chime,
By the work-weary heard ere morning prime.
Thanks to the beldam who betimes of yore
Dragged me from bed, and plunged me backwards o'er
Within thy waves ; and while her knees to climb
I struggling tried, repeated thrice the dose ;
No breathing time between for gasping given.
But as a sufferer at last outgrows
Affliction, and, as messengers from Heaven,
Loves what at first he stoutly had withstood,
So now I love thee in thy every mood.

VIII.

OCEAN.

(WRITTEN ON THE SHORE OF BUTE.)

II.

I LOVE to stand upon the billowy shore,
What time the tumbling waves with sparkling crest
Come rolling in, and hear the distant roar
Of Ocean as he rocks himself to rest ;
For then I hear a voice that speaks of yore,
That opens Memory's cells with gentle sway,
And his far voice is as a symphony
My thoughts to bound, or, wandering, to restore.
His voice is awful when from land to land
Their monstrous heads the foaming billows rear,
Like Alp o'er Alp—appear and disappear ;
Or break with deafening thunder on the strand :
But these lulled tones are like the curfew's peal,
They pain, yet please me, hurt me, and yet heal.

IX.

ON SEEING A SHOAL OF HERRINGS

PURSUED BY HUNDREDS OF SEA-GULLS AND PORPOISES.

THE gentle rippling of the azure deep
Betrays the movements of the finny shoal;
And, posting on like coursers to the goal,
From every side unnumbered sea-fowl sweep,
Voracious all, their harvest there to reap.
See, see, each moment how they tumble o'er,
And wedge-like how they dive, one, two, three, four !
And see the pellocks, how they plunge and leap !
Gorging themselves with havoc of their prey,
Who gamble on, or lie in calm repose !
'Tis thus with man : him numerous unseen foes
Pursue insatiate till his latest breath ;
While he, good easy soul ! holds on his way,
Playing his antics in the jaws of death !

X.

ON A BAND OF URCHINS FLYING A KITE.

Look at these little urchins as they stand
Within that field, each firm as a gate post,
Flying their kite, amid the clouds half lost !
Will they hereafter ever feel so grand ?
How gracefully she sweeps on either hand !
How Juno-like, as, with alternate pause
And rise, she gradually from earth withdraws !
And yet one imp the goddess can command !
The band of striplings follow her on high,
With eager look, till almost out of sight ;
And now their very soul seems in the sky,
So rapt they gaze, and with such mute delight.
Ye potentates of earth, come hither, see,
These ragged boys are more like kings than ye !

XI.

ON A BAND OF GIPSIES.

I.

NATURE'S own children, how I envy you !
Free as the covey in the mountain air,
Houseless although you be, and coarse your fare,
Nay, worse than coarse, scant and uncertain too !
And though the pelting rain-drops trickle through
Your tent, covered with tattered blankets bare,
Which father, mother, dogs, and children share ;
And ye do live much as wild Indians do !
Yes, you I envy, nor would wish to see
Your race reclaimed, while things are as they be.
Blue skies, bright suns, fresh breezes, runlets pure,
Mountains and waving woods, and, more than all,
The freeborn thought that ye are no man's thrall,
These brace the nerves and teach man to endure.

XII.

ON A BAND OF GIPSIES.

II.

Who that a moment thinks, would wish to bring
Your little wild barbarians to the wynds
Of populous cities, where the poor man finds
No sympathy with mute or living thing?
Where Autumn follows Summer—Summer, Spring—
Spring, Winter, unperceived; and where alone
The frosty Sire's dread influence is known:
And selfishness in all is life's mainspring.
See how the children of the labouring man,
In childhood's sunny days to toil are doomed!
In manhood's prime, their strength, do what they can,
In unavailing efforts all consumed!
And to the workhouse, see at last devolved
Their worn-out frames, all earthly ties dissolved!

XIII.

EMBLEMS OF LIFE.

I.

THE moralist can in the garden find
Emblems of man on Life's eventful stage,
And I would cull a nosegay for my page,
Wherewith the lesson on the heart to bind.
The violet and primrose me remind
Of Life's sweet Spring, so modest and so coy :
The rose expanding, of the girl and boy
Grown conscious, blushing at the very wind ;
But like the thistle soon he looks, and she
Like the sweet lily : in the hollyhock,
Yielding no scent, whose flowers atop' oft fade
Ere they expand, Life's Autumn we best see :
Her Winter in the Christmas rose low laid,
Braving as best she can the tempest's shock.

XIV.

EMBLEMS OF LIFE.

II.

I'VE culled a nosegay, now a wreath I'll choose,
Pluckt from the forest, to adorn my lay.
The tender maple, delicately gay,
Like Youth appears ; bright hopes it does diffuse ;
But May oft blights it with her chilling dews.
See Manhood emblemed in the stout oak green :
In bending ash is gentle Woman seen.
Life's Evening in these dark funereal yews :
Healthful they look, but neither wax nor wane ;
They're just as I remember long ago.
What tree is that, which seems to live with pain,
Whose gnarled boughs can scarce a shadow throw ?
It is the elm, that soon must quit the stage ;
In it behold an emblem of Old Age.

XV.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

SOUNDS please us, or displease, just as the mind
Is tuned, and as the scenes in which they're heard
We uncongenial, or congenial find.
The Spinning-wheel, when in the workhouse whirred
By some old pauper lunatic or dumb,
The long day through, like an ill-omened bird
Disturbing night, is doleful in its hum :
But in the cottage, where grimalkin purred,
Where the clock clicked or cuckooed on the wall,
And the black kettle sang its ditty low,
As one was wont to hear them long ago,
It was a pleasing sound, and musical.
How the long nights of Winter it beguiled
It was the voice of Thrift too, Virtue's child.

XVI.

ON SENDING "HERMAN AND DOROTHEA" TO THE
PRESS.

"HERMAN and DOROTHEA," ye have been
Companions of my way a full long year,
And now that I dismiss you, much I fear
The world will use you roughly ; some from spleen
And spitefulness, and some to show how keen
Their critic knife can cut. Scholars will sneer,
That one unlearned should dare to interfere
With classic rules, and wonder what I mean ;
And vengeance vow to take. But, truth to speak,
Their quarrel is that English is not Greek.
Worse I shall fare, I fear, with those who think
One's Pegasus should amble like a pad :
"What stuff is this ?" they'll say, "it does not clink ;
"Blank verse 'tis not, nor rhyme, but prose run mad."

XVII.

ON SENDING "LOUISA" TO THE PRESS.

AND so, "LOUISA," we at last must part :
And I, even as thy father when he saw
Thee from the loved paternal roof withdraw,
Cannot but grieve, for thou around my heart
Hast so entwined thyself, that I must start
As from a dream, ere I can realise
The thought, that thou, with all thy witcheries,
The mere creation of the poet art :
Such power has genius. O, illustrious bard !
I've held the mirror up to spread thy fame,
As thou to old Mæonides ; * my name
With thine to blend, my sole and great reward.
I've sung as in thy eye, that undismayed
In Hades I may meet thy honoured shade.

* Voss translated Homer into German.

XVIII.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF RAILWAYS.

THIS is the age of progress : time and space
Are things that were, are numbered with the dead ;
The universal cry is, " Go a-head ; "
Till scarce of our youth's world is left a trace.
But are we always wise when we displace
Things old and tried, to which our hearts were wed,
And substitute the untried in their stead ?
Or is our only aim to end the race ?
The box-seat of the mail, and quicker rail !
For true enjoyment who would once compare you ?
In that, ev'n if an accident occurs,
Why, to be sure, you're pitched off without fail,
But there you are : but on a rail, good sirs !
If there should be a blow up, why, where are you ?

XIX.

WRITTEN DURING THE RAILWAY MANIA.

WHEN in this quiet nook the "Times" I read,
And see what stir and bustle's in the world,—
What bubbles burst, how others these succeed,
And how the ball from one to another's whirled;
And in the midst of all see how hearts bleed,
What want prevails; I to the window look,
And find my prison hard indeed to brook :
I would be useful where there is such need.
Thou would'st be useful ! Well, but art thou sure,
If thou hadst health, thy thoughts would still be pure ?
Is there no fear that thou wouldst join the chase
With the mad herd, the maddest in the race ?
Thou wouldst be useful ! Learn to be content,
Nor tempt that fate thou might'st too late repent !

XX.

FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE CORN-LAWS.

(WRITTEN DURING THE THREATENED FAMINE FROM THE POTATO
DISEASE.)

MAINTAIN, O Lord, the cause of the oppressed !
Whose doom the livelong day is toil, toil, toil,
Who oft at midnight trim their lamp with oil,
Nor intermit their labour scarce for rest.
O ! soften thou their rulers' obdurate breast,
And make them yield to pity or to shame,
What they deny to Justice' sacred name ;
Even those whom Thou with corn and wine hast blest
Thus shall the threatened famine herald peace,
And those heartburnings shall for ever cease,
Which in the social fabric caused a breach ;
So shall the wrongs of millions be redressed,
And none will dare Thy wisdom to impeach,
Nor with the impious deem Thou slumberest.

XXI.

THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL.

WHAT is our country's ruin, but her wealth ?
And yet our senators and rulers bend
Their energies her treasures to extend,
Bartering for trash her happiness and health.
Most false delusion, with dire evils fraught !
When will this blundering legislation end ?
Will we not learn though by examples taught ?
And has this Scripture truth in vain been penned ?
So gorged are some with wealth that a full half
Of our great Babylon on sofas lie,
And nothing do but yawn, and loll, and quaff,
Cursing the tedious hours that will not fly :
The rest toil on from dawn till evening grey,
And curse the light that brings so soon the day.

XXII.

ON THE DISRUPTION OF THE CHURCH OF
SCOTLAND.

YE senators and judges of the land!
What frenzy has possessed you, to convulse
A nation to its centre, and repulse
Forth from our Ark, and with rebellion brand
The loving Chalmers and his faithful band?
Some laws there are, more honoured in the breach
Than in th' observance: if your statutes teach
What Christ disowns, your statutes we withstand.
Go with them, Lord! as with our fathers, when,
Hunted, they worshipped in the mountain glen,
Or on the ocean shore: nor ocean shore
Nor mountain glen is to Thy people free:
From this pursued, they to the highway flee,
And driven from that, they brave th' Atlantic's roar.

XXIII.

TO LAURA.

LAURA, if last to think of thee at e'en,
And first at morn ; if flowers for thee to rear,
Love what was thine, and wish thee always near,
Yet fly from thee whenever thou wert seen ;
To weep, and wonder what my tears might mean ;
In all sweet sounds thy sweeter voice to hear ;
When danger was, for thee alone to fear :
If this is love, I loved thee at fifteen.
And though since then ten years thrice told have passed
And I forget even when I saw thee last,
Yet when at intervals we chance to meet,
On thy pale cheek the roses still I see—
Thy eyes are beautiful, thy voice is sweet,
As in thy teens, when thou wert all to me.

XXIV.

TO LADY BUCHAN.

(WRITTEN FOR A FRIEND, A STUDENT AT OXFORD.)

OFT, when with mind o'ertasked, the ponderous tome,
Well pleased, I shut, on green-robed Spring to wait,
And quit the precincts of the hall and dome,
Dull cloistered shades, and academic state,
By Isis' osier banks at eve to roam,
I'll think of Amondell far off; where late,
With beating heart, I to its lordly gate
A stranger went, and found within a home.
Patron and friend! not Isis' classic stream,
Nor note of nightingale, beloved ere heard,
Because of poet's song and nightly dream,
Will touch within my heart a deeper chord,
Than mellow Autumn by fair Amon's tide,
Reflected sweetly at thy own fireside.

XXV.

FRIENDSHIP.

(ADDRESSED TO MRS HATTON.)

ELIZA, what is Friendship? 'Tis not love ;
To hear this said the little god would wince,
And you yourself displeasure would evince,
Whose life with love's embroidery was inwove :
And that I never loved, it too would prove ;
And then my Richmond would be up in arms
With all her little innocent alarms :
But still from love it is but one remove.
It is his younger sister—not so glowing ;
It is his elder—more of wisdom showing ;
'Tis not so selfish, jealous, or impassioned,
But calm, sincere, and, if you will, old-fashioned ;
Warm and affectionate, without all fuss :
In short, 'tis as Eliza is with us.

XXVI.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE things in life which we the most desire,
And find no labour to attain too great,
If realised at all, come oft too late,
To give the blossoms which the buds inspire,
And Hope's fruition lights Joy's funeral pyre.
The mitred head looks to the wicket gate
Of his old rectory, and laments his state.
The soldier, after many a conflict dire,
Where he his way to eminence had fought,
Finds he has stifled Nature—and for naught.
Statesmen, by shifts which honest men despise,
Manage to wriggle to the height of power,
And having sipped of the long envied flower,
Wish themselves down that they again might rise.

XXVII.

PATIENCE.

How shall I speak of Patience ? 'Tis to wait
With quiet deportment and contented mien,
Hopeful or hopeless, whatsoe'er our state,
If not in joyous mood, at least serene ;
Bearing ourselves to man with soul elate,
But towards God submissive and resigned,
With not a wish on our part to abate
The trials sent us till their fruit we find.
Of Christian graces 'tis perhaps the best,
Embracing, when imparted, all the rest.
How hard a grace so precious to attain !
Well, so it is, whatever some may teach ;
But let us try, at least, the goal to gain,
For aiming at the highest, high we reach.

XXVIII.

TO AFFLICTION.

AFFLICTION ! though thy aspect be severe,
And though thou art the messenger of grief,
Making the stout to tremble like a leaf
In yellow Autumn, when thou drawest near ;
Yet to the docile thou art as the seer,
Who spite their murmurings led his brethren on
Through desert tracks, by God himself foreshown,
Till lo ! Abarim's peaks at last appear.
When once our threshold thou hast fairly passed,
Although unwelcome, and thy sandals doft,
Thy countenance appears benign and soft,
Even as an elder sister's ; and, at last,
So much of Heaven around us is impressed,
When gone, we find an angel was our guest.

XXIX.

TO MEMORY.

How shall I speak thee, Memory? Till the soul
Is purified by grace and born again,
Thou art not what the poets idly feign,
Man's sweetest solace in this world of dole :
At best thou proffer'st an uncertain bowl,
Where all that's baleful is so mingled up
With what is sweet and fitted to console,
Of these we only sip, of those we sup.
But oh, sweet Memory! (for thou then art sweet)
When once the heart is touched by heavenly grace,
Delightful 'tis our footsteps to retrace,
And the fond tale of youth again repeat ;
For then we know our sins are all forgiven,
And feel that even our sorrows were from Heaven.

XXX.

ON THE ORDINATION AT BONHILL FREE CHURCH

SOME things there are, impressive and sublime
From their simplicity, which circumstance
And pageantry would lessen, not enhance :
Such is this sacred rite, where things of time
With things eternal blend. The gorgeous chime
Here is not heard ; no candelabrum burns ;
No censer smokes ; no painted oriel turns
The noon-day hour to matin's mystic prime,
Cradling the mind. Pomp were incongruous here
If back we look, too much it would appear ;
For what has He of Galilee to do
With pomp ? If forward we extend the view
To the Great Shepherd passed into the skies,
How little is all greatness men devise !

XXXI.

ON READING THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF THE
REV. JOHN NEWTON.

WHENCE comes it, when I read the lives of those
Who spent their years in labouring to achieve
Their worldly good, but scrupled not to leave
Uncared for their eternal, and foreclose
The golden gates which Christ wide open throws
Freely to all, whence comes it that I grieve?
Yet grieve the same o'er such as we believe
Were 'mong the wise—the better part who chose?
A look within, the mystery can solve:
When o'er the first I grieve, it is for them
Whom reason and religion both condemn:
When o'er the last, 'tis for myself I mourn;
To see their lamp so bright a ray evolve,
While mine but flickers and seems scarce to burn.

XXXII.

ON RAPHAEL MORGHEN'S ENGRAVING OF CARLO
DOLCCE'S

FIDES SALVAM FECIT.

THERE is a joy in childhood, when the heart,
The little heart, knows only of to-day,
And revels in it, brimful of its play ;
A sunny joy o'er which no shadows dart :
There is a joy when to new life we start
In youth, and love first in the bosom stirs ;
When o'er the loved one bending we impart
Our hopes and fears—and find them also hers.
But what are these to this seraphic bliss ?
What tranquil rapture beams in these soft eyes,
With gratitude combined ! Oh, joy like this
None ever felt, save the repentant soul
Who looked to Jesus 'mid sin's agonies,
And heard Him say, " Thy faith hath made thee whole ! "

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE CLYDE.

I.

I'VE gazed upon the deep blue Rhone,
As from the lake he bursts away,
And traced his course, swelled by the Saone,
Through olive groves and vineyards gay.

II.

The broad, broad Elbe I've seen, his waves
In frozen masses ponderous piled,
And where, a gentle stream, he laves
Bohemia's heathery mountains wild.

III.

And I have seen old Father Rhine,
The blue-eyed German's guardian god ;
His waves to quaff I've seen him pine,
And weep when first his banks he trod.

IV.

“Old Father Rhine! Old Father Rhine!”

I’ve heard the northern warrior cry;

“Old Father Rhine! river divine!

Thou art—thou art our boundary!”

V.

And I have ploughed the swelling Po,

Bearing his breast above the plain;

Mysterious stream! blessing and wo

Thy waters bring the trembling swain.

VI.

I’ve seen old Tyber, who the soul

Transports to days long since gone by;

Rome’s giant power, her capitol,

And temples there in ruins lie.

VII.

I’ve seen the lordly Danube roll

Forth from the rugged Schwartzwald drear,

Whose breadth of forest fills the soul

With awe, with wonder, and with fear.

VIII.

Away his giant course he bends
O'er many a land and far countrie,
And with the Euxine long contends,—
A sea himself rolled on the sea.

IX.

Astounded with his waters' roar,
I see the hoary Neptune rise;
Old Ocean leaves his wonted shore,
And, grumbling, down the Bosphorus flies.

X.

And these are noble rivers all,
And many a soul have they inspired
With patriot thoughts; at duty's call
Full many a heart with valour fired.

XI.

Roused by their murmurs, warriors oft
Have rushed impetuous on the foe;
And peasants have their bonnets doft,
To seize the basnet and the bow.

XII.

But why should I my song divide
With streams by bards immortal sung,
While to the fair and varied Clyde
No minstrel harp has yet been strung ?

XIII.

Arcadian scenes are thine, fair Clyde !
The rural pipe, clear tinkling rills,
Where sweet thy gathering waters glide
'Mong flowery meads and emerald hills :

XIV.

Where shepherdesses tend the flock
That wanders on the mountain's side,
Nor sigh for vanities that mock
The slaves of fashion and of pride :

XV.

Where lives the rustic, blessed with health,
Unconscious of a nobler sphere ;
Happy, he neither longs for wealth,
Nor ruthless poverty does fear :

XVI.

Where many a feudal castle lours,
With ivied walls storm-bleached and gray ;
I've heard the owl scream from those towers
That once with revelry were gay.

XVII.

And where are they, the barons proud,
Who reared those noble turrets high ?
Their mantle now is but a shroud—
Hero and house in ruins lie.

XVIII.

Round Tinto now he winds serene,
Then sweeps far o'er the distant plain ;
But loath to leave so sweet a scene,
He turns to kiss her feet again.

XIX.

Now eddying smooth he speeds along,
Loud murmuring as his waters swell ;
Now whirling wild, now gurgling strong,
He dives into the bosky dell.

XX.

Then o'er the rugged precipice,
Like madman in his fury, pours,
And deep, deep in the dread abyss,
He whirls, and boils, and foams, and roars.

XXI.

Around Stonebyres what beauty lies!
The Terni of our northern clime;
With Tivoli thy Cora vies,
Less beautiful, but more sublime.

XXII.

Less rapid now he wandering glides
'Mong scenes now sombre, and now gay—
Now in primeval forest hides,
Now glitters in the sunny ray.

XXIII.

In joyous spring, with what delight
I've seen thy banks with blossom crowned,
The pear and plum so silvery white,
The blushing apple, crimson bound!

XXIV.

And heard the ploughboy whistle shrill,
Or listened to the milkmaid's song,
The cattle lowing on the hill,
The thrush's notes the woods among.

XXV.

Oft have I strayed in Cartland wood,
And heard the linnet on the spray—
Oft paused to hear the murmuring flood,
And stopt to pull the primrose gay :

XXVI.

Oft listened to the cushat-dove,
When evening spread her mantle round ;
In every field and every grove
Was naught but love and fragrance found.

XXVII.

How desert-like now all appears,
As memory back through life does fly !
How blank is all, save the few years
When love's luxuriant pulse beat high !

XXVIII.

To see thee when th' autumnal leaf
Attunes the soul to pensive mood ;
The reapers bearing home the sheaf,
How glows the heart with gratitude !

XXIX.

What though no vines thy banks adorn,
Nor olives in thy groves are seen,
Thy fields are bright with waving corn,
Thy sloping banks are ever green !

XXX.

Thine is the oak of thousand years,
With giant arms to Heaven outspread ;
The fragrant birch, emblem of tears,
That seems to sorrow for the dead !

XXXI.

The fairy rowan, the scented palm,
The bending ash, and hardy pine ;
The aspen trembling in the calm,
The sacred holly, these are thine !

XXXII.

Now noble mansions grace thy stream,
High towering from the verdant lawn,
Some fading like day's parting beam,
Some fresh and shining like the dawn.

XXXIII.

Its gorgeous front the palace rears ;
But me, such grandeur but appals—
Its portal, tribune, marble stairs,
Gold fretted roofs, and lofty halls.

XXXIV.

More dear the cot, embowered in trees,
Infolded in the woodbine's arms ;
The palace may the great ones please,
But all feel gentle Nature's charms.

XXXV.

What arch is that o'erspan's the flood,
That chafes in anger as it flows ?
'Tis Bothwell, once the field of blood,
Where freemen fell, whence freedom rose.

XXXVI.

Departed spirits of the brave !

'Twas not in vain ye bled for truth ;

A halo still surrounds your grave,

Which fans the flame of zeal in youth !

XXXVII.

And when Heaven's awful trump shall ring,

And tyrants, trembling, hear their doom,

Then ye your way to Heaven shall wing,

Though daisies only decked your tomb.

XXXVIII.

But see ! wide o'er the fertile plain

The city rears her spires on high,

Where busy Commerce holds her reign—

Cradle of wealth and misery !

XXXIX.

Where Learning, too, her temple rears,

Within whose academic porch

Smith walked, whom Science still reveres,

And at his pages lights her torch.

XL.

Where Watt from Nature forth did draw
Her secrets, and his engine planned,
Till Time and Space astonished saw
The vast Atlantic Ocean spanned.

XLI.

And now he laves Dunbritton's rocks,
Where war's alarums dread have been ;
Now like war's tomb that castle looks,
All lies so lonely and so green.

XLII.

Afar, like guardians of the land,
The giant Grampians proudly tower ;
There Rome first felt a conqueror's hand,
'Twas there her eagles first did cower.

XLIII.

Eternal mountains ! cities rise
Where once the elk and bison ranged ;
And from the world pass dynasties,
Forgot, but ye remain unchanged !

XLIV.

How strange, while gazing here, to think
What strifes ye've seen, what yet shall see !
The Past ye with the Present link,
And shadow forth Futurity.

XLV.

And now he meets old Ocean's tide,
And mingles with the briny flood ;
Where countless sails like spirits glide,
Spirits on errands bent of good.

XLVI.

Where towns and villas thickly blent,
Lie clustering round the sounding shore,
Where those within the city pent,
Enjoyment find, their labour o'er.

XLVII.

Where Arran rearing high his peaks,
Looks proudly down on all below ;
Loved isle ! whom Morning earliest streaks,
Where Eve last lingers, loath to go !

XLVIII.

From towering Tinto's summit blue,
Where all untended strays the flock,
To Ailsa, where the wild sea-mew
Screams o'er the rugged sea-girt rock,

XLIX.

'Tis beauty all, though changing ever ;
Each bend more lovely than before :
Farewell, sweet stream ! full flowing river !
And frith with far receding shore !

ON REVISITING TUDHOE, WHERE I HAD BEEN
AT SCHOOL.

I.

SCENES every day or year beheld
No food for meditation yield,
And rarely touch the heart ;
But those by manhood left behind,
Revisited, impress the mind,
And wisdom oft impart.

II.

Thus day by day I pass the spot
Unheeded, if not quite forgot,
Where played the sportive elf ;
Yet see no checkering shadows dark
Steal o'er the scene, nor scarcely mark
A change upon myself.

III.

But 'tis not so, as here I gaze
On scenes not seen since school-boy days,
When pleasure could not pall :
My joys and sports, my playmates too,
My hopes and fears, all rise to view ;
I ask where are they all ?

IV.

But yet, methinks, the landscape seems
Not such as fancy fondly deems ;
Less rustic looks the plough :
Those windings that once long appeared,
Those trees that high their branches reared,
How short and tiny now !

V.

The village tower appears no more
With dark green ivy mantled o'er ;
I hear no curfew ring ;
Nor thrush nor blackbird tell their loves,
Nor little linnets in the groves,
Although the season's spring.

VI.

Was all then but a fairy dream,
As emblemed in the mountain stream
The flowery turf that tears ?
The clay soon moistens and falls down,
The daisy that the turf did crown,
The torrent onward bears.

VII.

No, 'tis no dream : the scene's unchanged ;
Thyself art from thyself estranged ;
The man is not the boy ;
And age (if age shall e'er be thine)
Shall teach thee for those things to pine,
That scarcely now give joy.

THE EAGLE.*

I.

ON the bald edge of some gigantic rock,
That hangs upon Ben Caillach capped with snow,
Where no uproar that shakes the world below
E'er comes, save when some elemental shock
The echoes of the mountain does unlock,
When round, and round, and round they rumbling go,
Earth's hollow womb reverberating slow
The rolling thunder 'mong the clouds that broke,
The Eagle sits ; and with keen searching glance,
Huge mountain ridges, and broad desert tracts,
The far horizon, ocean's vast expanse,
Rocks, rivers, islands, roaring cataracts,
The ethereal regions with their clouds and racks,
Calmly surveys, and takes in all at once.

* See Wilson's Account of the Habits of the Bald Eagle.

II.

To him all climes and seasons are the same :
In torrid and in frigid zone he's found ;
Alike in Greenland's continent ice-bound,
And where the hot Siroc blows like a flame :
The ocean rover, wondering whence he came,
Finds him at sea, no resting-place around :
Him distance tires not, hunger does not tame,
The whirlwind or the hurricane astound.
He to the vulture and hyena leaves
(Those scavengers obscene and loathed that be)
The offals of the forest, and the sea ;
No tainted carrion his clean beak receives ;
He makes his quarry where life's pulses dart,
And tears his victim while yet beats the heart.

III.

Calmly he sits and sees beneath,
All busy at their game of death,

The sea-gull with its breast of snow,
Now circling high, now skimming low ;
The solan-goose, with wings black tipt,
As if in molten ebony dipt ;
The glede that now describes a curve,
And now scarce from the spot does swerve,
Who makes his cradle in the skies,
So still and motionless he lies ;
And hovering in the ether blue,
The lapwing, plover, and curlew.
All these he sees the blue sky dot,
All these he sees, but heeds them not,
For from the far horizon dim
He sees the fishhawk slowly swim ;
On him he darts his lance-like eye,
Marks him alone his labour ply ;
And when the fields of air he leaves,
And like a wedge the blue sea cleaves,
Voracious as the shark or pike,
The eagle knows 'tis time to strike.

IV.

He lifts himself—yet scarcely lifts—
A moment—then his posture shifts,
Levels his neck, half spreads his wing,
Feels if his nerves are all the thing,
Ere from the rock he launches free,
Into the blue infinity.
But what was that like arrow's flight
Pierced the blue sky with speed of light ?
What thing was that whizzed past scarce seen,
Like bullet from some culverin ?
Was it the Eagle ? Yes, 'twas he,
For now his quarry leaves the sea,
And ere securely poised in air,
Already is the Eagle there !
In vain the fishhawk thinks of flight—
The Eagle's speed is as the light ;
In vain to reach the upper skies—
The Eagle higher still can rise ;
In vain he thinks to dash below—
The Eagle's pounce he well does know ;

But loath to yield his scaly treasure,
He thinks of fight—his foe does measure,
But cowering 'neath that huge expanse
Of wing, and that life-piercing glance,
One scream he gives in wild despair,
And drops his prey—the Eagle's there !

v.

And now, exulting, through the fields of sky
He posts along, majestic in his flight ;
And with such vigour his huge vans does ply
He lessens every moment in our sight :
And now he dashes in the clouds outright,
And sees the mountain tops beneath him lie,
Now skirrs the precipice's giddy height,
Where hangs projecting out his eyrie high :
The eaglet's eyes like very lightning gleam,
At his approach, hear, hear, how fierce they scream

TO THE SWALLOW.

I.

SKIMMING over field and fallow,
See at last the longed-for Swallow!
Welcome to thee, thou new comer!
Welcome, welcome, now 'tis Summer!

II.

In the stillness of the gloamin,
Looking out on blue Ben Lomond,
I delight to hear thy twitter
Outside of the window shutter.

III.

I delight to see thy bosom,
Whiter than the hawthorn blossom,
And, like things that are forbidden,
Think 'tis whiter since half-hidden.

IV.

Light as the thin cloudlet's shadow
Thou dost skim the flowery meadow,
Than the fleetest greyhound fleeter,
Better than the best repeater.

V.

But this moment thou wast yonder,
And before I've time to ponder,
Quick as lightning when 'tis flashing,
Past my face thou now art dashing.

VI.

Sure thou art of birds the quickest,
On the wing thy food thou pickest,
On the wing thy water sippest,
While the wave thou scarcely tippest.

VII.

Sure thou art a very fairy,
All thy movements are so airy ;
All thy evolutions showing
Elegance wherever going.

VIII.

Know'st thou, Swallow, that the sages
Thy migration much engages?
Now one theory's the fashion,
Now another's all the passion.

IX.

These thou mindest not a feather,
All thou askest is good weather;
Arguing on such a trifle,
Thou a smile can'st hardly stifle.

X.

Fine barometers to guide me,
None I need with thee beside me—
Just as low or high thou dwellest,
Rain or sunshine thou foretellest.

XI.

Fields need not be tinted yellow
To proclaim 'tis Autumn mellow;
When ye do in flocks assemble,
Then for Summer I must tremble.

XII.

Thee, sweet bird, will I be watching
When hoar Winter is approaching,
And thee failing to discover,
I will think sweet Summer over.

TO THE SKYLARK.

I.

HER nightingale let England boast,
The Skylark is for me ;
Of birds the bird I love the most
The Skylark gay to see.

II.

As Heaven's blue pathway, like a thing
Of light, it up does climb,
See how it fans each little wing,
Its warbling sweet to time !

III.

How fearlessly it scales the sky,
There at its ease to ride !
Hast thou a resting-place on high,
An ærial thread to guide ?

IV.

Far, far above the world it flies,
And vanishes from view ;
I'm giddy gazing on the skies,
The skies so bright and blue.

V.

Where art thou, little chorister,
That makes the welkin ring ?
I see thee not in earth or air,
And yet I hear thee sing !

VI.

The thrush must have his birchen bower,
The blackbird his pear-tree,
But thou'rt content to sing thy hour
Above the moorland lea.

VII.

The nightingale ere comes the snow
Is far off on the wing,
But thou dost stay, at least to show
Thou'lt warble in the Spring.

VIII.

Sweet bird ! the friend I'd choose is one
Who loves whate'er betide,
Like thee, who, when the Summer's done,
Still winters at our side.

TO THE ROBIN-REDBREAST.

(WRITTEN FOR MAGGY CRAWFORD.)

I.

THE Robin-redbreast hops about
The garden all the year,
Singing alike when flowers are out,
And when they disappear.

II.

When Winter comes, and chilling snows
Lie thick on shrubs and trees,
With mankind he familiar grows,
And hops in, if you please.

III.

He first hops on the window sill,
Looks this way, and then that,
Makes up his mind if him to kill
Lies there no tabby-cat.

IV.

And finding idle his surmise,
He in at once does come ;
And while you think he's looking wise,
He's thinking of a crumb.

V.

Him, every one, both young and old,
And rich and poor, esteems,
He is so artless, yet so bold,
And so old-fashioned seems.

VI.

His conscience tells him, I don't doubt,
That he at times does steal ;
But then to see the corn spread out,
And hunger keen to feel !

VII.

Thou'rt welcome here, ev'n for thyself,
Sweet bird ! more welcome still,
That thou, while hopping on that shelf,
A lesson can'st instil.

VIII.

Like thee, when gay the garden blooms,
And skies are soft and blue,
I would be cheerful, and when comes
Cold Winter, cheerful too.

IX.

Within my Father's garden I,
Like thee, would dwell ; at last
That to his mansion I might fly,
To shield me from the blast.

X.

Thee I have welcomed, though my corn
I know was filched by thee ;
And though I've treated Him with scorn,
Perhaps He'll welcome me.

TO MRS EWING OF STRATHLEVEN'S BULLFINCH.

I.

HAIL, little captive ! with a head
As black as any crow's,
A bosom as an apple red,
And like a puncheon fashionèd,
And good for giving blows !

II.

Hard is thy lot : scarce wert thou hatched,
Thy feathers scarce hadst found,
When thee an urchin, who had watched
Thy progress like a lover, snatched,
And in a prison bound.

III.

At first thou show'dst thy puny rage,
Th' injustice to resent ;
War with all things in reach didst wage,
Fly at the grating of thy cage,
And useless fury vent.

IV.

But not long didst thou pine and fret ;
Finding thy efforts vain,
Thou on the spars thyself did'st set,
To listen to the flageolet,
And imitate its strain.

V.

And now thou'rt pleased the livelong day,
And sing'st unbid thy song ;
Far sweeter is thy captive lay,
Than thy wild native minstrelsy
The woodland quire among.

VI.

Sweet bird! there's one I know, whose fate
Much like thine own is seen ;
Who, though he loved early and late
On Nature in the fields to wait,
A prisoner long has been.

VII.

Like thee, at first he fretted much,
And ill at ease did feel ;
But finding vain demeanour such,
He listened—then his lyre did touch,—
Now sings his griefs to heal.

VIII.

More blest than thou! no partner kind
Thy prison chamber knows,
But he has one, who, though inclined
Her happiness 'mong friends to find,
For him all friends foregoes.

TO EUPHEMIA HENRIETTA, ON HER FIFTEENTH
BIRTHDAY.

I.

EUPHEMIA, I have never yet
 Addressed to thee a song,
Though to my bosom thou art knit
 By ties both tight and strong.

II.

But now, well-pleased I snatch my lyre,
 A bagatelle to twine,
And if there's music in the wire,
 To-day it shall be thine :

III.

For Time, whose car's no lumbering wain,
 Whose wheels are never worn,
Has brought the joyous Spring again,
 And brought thy natal morn.

IV.

Thy natal morn ! and can it be
That fifteen years have sped,
Since first the light so cheerily
On thy wee eyes was shed ?

V.

It makes me sad, or something so,
To see time fly so fast—
Not that my brow is tinged with snow,
But that thy childhood's past !

VI.

For hitherto papa has stood
Between thy cares and thee ;
But when thou art in womanhood,
I fear that scarce can be.

VII.

But why of aught that's saddening speak
On this auspicious day ?
I would not blanch thy rosy cheek,
Nor chase its smile away.

VIII.

Yet where affection is too strong
The subject to elude,
Forgive, though in a sprightly song
A serious thought intrude.

IX.

And, my dear child, there's One above,
In whose paternal eye
We all are children, if to love
And serve Him we but try.

X.

I needs must send thee, as is wont,
Mamma's best wish and mine ;
But what that wish is, is a point
Not easy to define.

XI.

Well, the best wish to send to thee,
All hopes and fears apart,
Is just that thou may'st always be
As happy as thou art.

TO MY COUSIN MATILDA.

I.

MATILDA, dear, whence doth it come,
And why should it be so,
That more than wont my thoughts now roam
On thee, and long ago ?

II.

Say, is it that the yellow leaves
Which wave on rowans tall,
Or Autumn's golden fields and sheaves,
Thy auburn locks recall ?

III.

Or does the fitful gleam that plays
On mountain, lake, and isle,
That steals away while yet we gaze,
Recall thy chastened smile ?

IV.

Or do I, in the last lone bird
By hunters left behind,
That late on social pinion whirred,
Of thee an emblem find ?

V.

Or does the calm mute Nature shows,
Transfuse itself in me,
And in the change she undergoes,
What waits us, do I see ?

VI.

'Tis none of these, but something else,
Perhaps to these akin,
That leads my thoughts, and stills the pulse
That beats my breast within.

VII.

The falling leaf, the hollow wind,
That wait on Hallow-tide,
How can they fail me to remind
Of those that long since died ?

VIII.

And though I love Matilda's smile,
Her eyes, and auburn hair,
Yet more, that oft in these, the while,
I see those that once were.

TO MY COUSIN MATILDA.

I.

WHEN first I wrote you long ago,
(The years, ah, me ! how fast they flow !)
You answered in a day or so,
Matilda !

II.

'Twas thus, till Time upon my cheek
And brow had laid perchance a streak,
And then I found you took a week,
Matilda !

III.

But now you let at least a moon
Pass o'er ere you vouchsafe your boon,
And then I fear you think it soon,
Matilda !

IV.

A few years more, and much I fear
You'll make me wait a full long year,
And then I'll think, oh dear ! oh dear !

Matilda !

V.

Each morning, when the breakfast's set,
I ask, "Is there no letter yet ?"
"No, none, papa," is all I get,

Matilda !

VI.

Sometimes I think you are not well,
And then scarce know on which to dwell,
On hope or fear, the truth to tell,

Matilda !

VII.

For if you're ill, I'm wae for thee,
If well, I for myself must be,
For then you have forgotten me,

Matilda !

VIII.

And now I'd say before we part,
In case these lines should break thy heart,
That in my eyes thou ever art

Matilda.

TO MY COUSIN MATILDA.

AN INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY IN SPRING.

I.

MATILDA, come, for now 'tis May,
The lawn with cowslips sweet is gay,
The primroses peep from their screen,
As one by one the stars at e'en.

II.

The flowers seem eager all to burst,
The contest is, which shall be first;
The lilacs and laburnums vie,
The tulip and anemone.

III.

The larch has donned her mantle green,
The oak bursts out in golden sheen,
The ash of tufts sends down a shower,
And soon the hawthorn-tree will flower.

IV.

The woods are vocal all with song,
For every tree has now a tongue ;
And should you pause one throat to hear,
A thousand vibrate in your ear.

V.

The blackbird sings, then stops his lay
To hear in turn the thrush's say ;
Less diffident, the finch through all
Pours forth his little madrigal.

VI.

If to the fields your feet you bend,
You hear the landrails without end,
'Tis craik, craik here, and craik, craik there,
And craik, craik yonder—everywhere.

VII.

The cuckoo's voice from matin hour
Is heard from out his birchen bower ;
And even the peacock when he screams,
In concert heard, harmonious seems.

VIII.

The lake no more rolls like the sea,
The lambs are bleating on the lea,
In pailfuls now the milk is quaffed,
For, last not least, the cow has calved.

IX.

Come then, dear friend, do not delay ;
The daffodils have passed away,
And part of Summer's beauty's gone,
Ere you to taste it have begun.

TO MARIA.

AN INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY IN WINTER.

I.

THOUGH Winter howls through leafless woods,
He has at times his pleasant moods ;
Then come, Maria, do not fear,
Although it be mid-winter drear.

II.

Come, see our skies so bright and blue,
Our brimful lake of sapphire hue,
Ben Lomond with his swan-down plaid,
Upon his brawny shoulders laid.

III.

Come, see us in our Christmas bowers,
Our laurustinas white with flowers,
Our laurels green as green can be,
With berries red our holly-tree.

IV.

Perhaps a straggling rose we'll meet,
Of Summer gone memento sweet ;
Perhaps some firstling of the Spring,
Hepatica, or other thing.

V.

Come, see the robins quite at ease
Peck at the window, if you please ;
Or, in the woods, come, hear the jay
Fighting and quarrelling all the day.

VI.

Although our choristers are mute,
There's life and health in bird and brute,
Warm fur the cow has on its back,
Red are the deer, crows glossy black.

VII.

What though at times the skies may lower,
And storms put on their visage sour !
Though pelting blasts the drift drive in,
Nor storms, nor blasts you'll find within.

VIII.

You'll see us in our parlour snug,
With "Worry" stretched out on the rug,
The urn loud-hissing, and the fire
Laugh, laughing to your heart's desire.

IX.

Say, does the sketch thy fancy take?
Then come, one of our fireside make;
But if you find it but humdrum,
Why then, dear friend, in pity come.

TO MRS EWING OF STRATHLEVEN,

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT FROM HER OF A PAIR OF HOSE.

I.

DEAR friend, although that wicked imp,
John Frost, may dull my song,
And though my muse perchance may limp,
Unused to rhyme for long ;

II.

I needs must do what in me lies
To thank thee for the Hose,
Though more the tender heart I prize
From which the kindness flows.

III.

Thy gift when dreary Winter reigns
Will warm my nether-man,
And when bland Summer clothes the plains,
Still friendship's flame 'twill fan.

IV.

Come on, ye blasts ! I long to see
Your visage grim and spite,
Now that I'm armed all cap-a-pie,
And ready for the fight.

V.

I long to show how weak your rage,
How pointless all your darts,
When the unequal war ye wage,
With Woman's tender arts.

VI.

Your rage will harmless 'gainst me pour
As his renowned in song
'Gainst Paris, whom fair Venus bore
Safe from the battle's throng.

VII.

Nor do I reap the whole reward,
Not me alone you've blest,
For now I freely may accord
My Richmond her request ;

VIII.

Who often thus put in her claims
For my old hose coarse-spun,
“O put away these rags, dear James,
Let what *is* done *be* done !”

IX.

Some beggar thus in his cold shed
Will feel thy bounty too,
And asking blessings on my head,
Will bring them down on you.

TO MARIA,

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT FROM HER OF A PAIR OF CUFFS.

I.

YOUR gift, Maria, I received
At breakfast time to-day,
Whereon my breast impatient heaved,
Thee thanks in verse to pay.

II.

Good creature you, who, when you're here,
Take kindly my rebuffs,
And send me, when you disappear,
A present of warm Cuffs !

III.

For their own sake prize them I shall ;
Still more, because true blue,
Which suits a whig ; but most of all,
Because a gift from you.

IV.

I see, Matilda to dethrone
 You mean, you cunning elf,
And when you've got her fairly down,
 To reign supreme yourself.

V.

You saw, each time her purse I drew
 I pressed it to my lips,
And in such guise your threads you threw
 As might her gift eclipse.

VI.

Well, you've succeeded to a tee,
 Her purse I rarely view,
But your warm Cuffs all day I see,
 And feel their comfort too.

ON AN AURICULA DESTROYED BY FROST.

I.

THE winter seemed past, soft the westland wind blew,
And brought mirth and joy on its wing,
The meadows began to put on their gay hue,
And the garden with music to ring.

II.

The change an Auricula felt at its core,
And thought to itself it is May ;
It pushed forth its stem, and showed that its flower
Was ready to burst in a day.

III.

I watched it each morning, and o'er it did lean,
To see its corolla expand,
Till fully developed its blossom was seen,
And the pride of the plot it did stand.

IV.

But Winter, alack ! o'er the shoulder of Spring
Was looking, and mischief 'gan brew,
Like yon mountain cloud-capt, in its snowy wreath hapt,
Overlooking those hills of green hue.

V.

Down he came when he saw Flora's eyes turned away,
Leaving ruin behind in his track ;
For when I next went the parterre to survey,
I found my Auricula black !

VI.

Methought as I o'er it disconsolate stood,
Me it seemed with its fate to upbraid ;
Had I taken a fir-twigg and made it a hood,
It would not thus low have been laid !

VII.

My muse from this tale would this moral indite,
With a hope in the heart it may sink,
“ That none of us do all the good that we might,
And why ?—just because we don't think.”

TO THE SNOWDROP.

I.

SWEET flower, I love thee, for thou art
The certain harbinger of Spring ;
Ere hoary Winter's storms depart,
Thou tempt'st the thrush and merle to sing.

II.

While lifeless still the jasmines lie,
Like fossils from the rock laid bare,
Thy form, delighted, we descry,
Like some pale nun for matins yare.

III.

Though fields and woods around were strewn
With flowers, thou still would'st lovely be ;
But how much lovelier alone
Piercing the snow-wreaths on the lea !

IV.

Though tiny thou, proud man may learn,
Rebuked by thee, this changeless truth,
That he who praise or meed would earn,
Must smile even in stern Winter's tooth.

V.

Pure flower, that gems the cheerless earth,
To me apt emblem of my child !
Misfortune lowered upon her birth,
Dark was the day when first she smiled.

VI.

Alas ! yet may return the blast,
And nip thy beauty in its bloom ;
May she then emblem what thou wast,
Be thou no emblem of her doom !

LAMENT FOR THE YOUNG CORNET.

I.

OH, glory ! oh, horror ! my brain's in a whirl ;
Thus spoke in her anguish, a poor orphan girl.

II.

No father had I, no sister, no mother,
But, praised be kind Heaven ! I had a dear brother.

III.

So kind was this brother, so blessed was my lot,
That I was an orphan I almost forgot.

IV.

But he heard of war, far across the deep sea,
And nothing would please him, a soldier he'd be.

V.

I told him of dangers,—he laughed my fears down,
And told me of glory, and fame, and renown.

VI.

I burst into tears,—but he kissed them off all,
And me his own brave little sister did call.

VII.

We parted—and scarce had he touched Indian ground,
When the drum beat to arms, the bugle 'gan sound.

VIII.

There was mounting of horses, and harnessing then,
And dragging of cannon, and mustering of men !

IX.

'Mid the hurry, and noise, and uproar that was there,
Much I fear was no time for a thought or a prayer.

X.

He mounted in haste, with his eye beaming bright,
And flashed his good sword in the thick of the fight.

XI.

When the dreadful artillery's curtain arose,
He was seen, and just seen, when again it did close.

XII.

When it opened anew, housings streaming with gore,
His horse was still seen, but no rider he bore.

XIII.

'Twas enough—'twas enough,—I can picture the rest,
As they snatched a short sleep with their belts on their breast :

XIV.

For the sun had gone down ere the battle was ended,
And the foe hovering near, scarce the wounded were tended.

XV.

Round Jellalabad's hero his comrades did crowd,
Of his camp cloak they made him a soldier's fit shroud :

XVI.

They muffled the drum, and a volley they gave,
When they laid the old warrior down in his grave.

XVII.

But o'er the young Cornet no gun did they fire,
His grave was scooped out by some wretches for hire :

XVIII.

And they tumbled him in the fierce foeman beside,
With his eyes staring round, and his mouth gaping wide.

XIX.

Oh, horror ! oh, glory ! my brain's in a whirl,
Thus spoke in her anguish the poor orphan girl.

LECKINSKY.

I.

IN the cold cloudy North deeds sometimes are done
As impassioned as those in the land of the Sun :
In the fields, at the dance, I oft suddenly start ;
Love and Pride, what a wreck ye once made of this heart !

II.

In my April of life I knew maidens enow,
But to none, though they smiled on me, would my heart bow.
'Twas not that indifference or coldness forbade,
For my bosom was tender, and sighed for a maid.

III.

But the poet's creations within my soul beamed,
Of a Juliet or Rosalind always I dreamed :
I could dally with others a short sunny hour,
But dashed soon away, like the bee from the flower.

IV.

At last Heaven sent me the maiden I sighed for,
And, oh ! how I loved her, how gladly had died for !
I pined to be near her, and yet when I might,
My heart beat so wildly, I fled from her sight.

V.

She blushed when I met her, but then I had read
Of maidens who blushed, yet refused to be wed :
When she heard I was gay she a sadness would show,
Was it love, I oft wondered, could make her look so ?

VI.

I thought she preferred me at times ; but again,
My love made me fear I perhaps was mista'en :
I tortured my bosom to find out the truth,
And thus wore away one long year of my youth.

VII.

At last, on the green where the villagers play,
In the dusk of the evening she met me one day ;
She smiled on me sweetly, and scarcely could speak,
And the blush came and went on her beautiful cheek.

VIII.

When the twilight had faded, and forced us to part,
How I gazed in her eyes, and how throbbed my fond heart !
We parted, and promised to meet there again,
But ere then a hurricane swept through my brain.

IX.

A wretch, or an idiot, it recks not now which,
Knocked me up in my hall, and began thus to preach ;
“ Leckinsky,” he said, and he looked like a brother,
“ The maid you think loves you is pledged to another.”

X.

Did you e'er see the lightning dart out in the storm ?
Of my eyes how they flashed you a picture may form :
The lightning-scathed oak but a faint image shows
Of the wreck of my heart ere his tale he did close.

XI.

I tossed day and night in the wildest despair,
Rest, rest was my cry, rest, rest anywhere :
In frenzy I rushed to the arms of another,
And swore that I loved her, my passion to smother.

XII.

Oh, God! with a heart that is pining away,
To mix in the dance, and pretend to be gay!
Oh, God! with a soul given up to one maid,
And your arms round another you know you've betrayed!

XIII.

The deed was scarce done when I met the loved girl;
The landscape spun round me, all seemed in a whirl;
But I looked on her now as I look on a shrine,
As I gaze on a star that can never be mine.

XIV.

A moon had scarce passed when I found that the tale
They had told me was false, but what would it avail?
My doom was now sealed, I had filled my own cup,
From the brim to the dregs I must drink it all up.

XV.

I pass by the scene that ensued on that day,
I shudder to think of it yet, though now grey:
My life ere I loved was the lamp in the hall,
But it now was the shadow it casts on the wall.

XVI.

I fled from my home on the Vistula's flood,
Nor halted till far by the Danube I stood ;
Where, raging with fever, long prostrate I lay,
And dallied with death till three moons passed away.

XVII.

I was not delirious but wished so to be,
Love, anguish, and shame made such havoc of me :
I called upon death as I lay on its brink ;
But a new cup was brewing I yet had to drink.

XVIII.

The maid I played false with, pretending to love,
Strange rumours had heard by some carrier dove,
And a blood-vessel burst in her heart or her lung,
And she gasped forth her soul with my name on her tongue.

XIX.

Oh, God ! with a weight on the soul like to mine,
Yet to dance with delight, and to fill up the wine !
To dance o'er the death you have made come to pass !
Then look yourself full in the face in the glass !

XX.

Long time as an outcast I wandered about,
In solitude now, now at revel and rout ;
But a black cloud hung o'er me wherever I went,
Like the volume that rolls from the furnace's vent.

XXI.

At last I took courage and homeward returned,
But the love which I proffered the sweet maiden spurned,
For she knew all the bad of this tale I have told,
And shame would not let me its prelude unfold.

XXII.

In the cold cloudy North deeds sometimes are done
As impassioned as those in the land of the Sun :
In the field, at the dance, I oft suddenly start ;
Love and Pride, what a wreck ye have made of this heart

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK.

I.

OH! that I knew where my Clock could be seen!
Thus cried a young woman in weeds at nineteen.

II.

Kind, kind was my Robin, when work he could get,
He always was bringing me something to pet.

III.

But the neat little Clock that aye "cuckoo" did call,
Was the thing of all things that I loved most of all:

IV.

For it brought up before me the white hawthorn-tree,
Where first I thought Robin was thinking of me.

V.

Oh! the white hawthorn-tree, and the bonny blue sky,
And the cowslips of May, how I wish I could die!

VI.

We came to the town to get work at the mill,
But scarce had we come when my Robin fell ill.

VII.

Night and day I watched o'er him with tears on my cheek,
But for all I did for him, he died in a week.

VIII.

Then to pay for his grave, and for tending him well,
All the things that we had I was forced off to sell.

IX.

But the neat little Clock I still managed to keep,
For when it cried "cuckoo," I found I could weep.

X.

I kept it before all the clocks in the town,
To hear it "cuckoo" while I put on my gown :

XI.

And before going out I again made it slack,
To hear it "cuckoo" when from work I came back.

XII.

At last I fell sick, and my rent could not pay,
And they tore down my Cuckoo, and took it away.

XIII.

Then I felt such a burning and pain in my brain,
It seemed as if Robin had died o'er again.

XIV.

Oh! cruel, to take what to them was not worth,
But to me was far dearer than aught upon earth!

XV.

So long as my Cuckoo beside me did stay,
I thought of my Robin by night and by day:

XVI.

But now all my thoughts both confused are and dim,
Sometimes on my Cuckoo, and sometimes on him.

XVII.

And, oh! that I knew where my Clock could be seen!
Thus cried the young woman in weeds at nineteen.

THE WHITE OWL.

I.

A WHITE Owl oft at eve was seen
Soft skimming past our door,
Or slowly sailing o'er the green
From Lomond's pebbly shore.

II.

But like some streamer in the sky,
Or disembodied soul,
It passed ere we had time to cry,
“Look, look, there goes the Owl!”

III.

And when beneath the old oak trees
We crept with stealthy foot,
It showed such freedoms did not please,
But hiding cried, “Hoot, hoot.”

IV.

But mystery is the warp and woof
The web of life that flowers ;
And so the more it kept aloof,
The more we wished it ours.

V.

So Donald in the old barn-house
Soon closed up every gap,
And when it went to catch a mouse,
He caught it in a trap :

VI.

And bore it, anxious us to please,
In triumph round the room ;
Was never miss less at her ease,
From boarding-school just come.

VII.

But soon we all 'gan to surmise,
With care our guest was fraught,
That what when free we deemed a prize,
Might prove a plague when caught.

VIII.

And while with look most sage and grave
It passed from hand to hand,
We o'er its fate in high conclave
And deep debate did stand.

IX.

Would it be safe to clip its wing,
And treat it like a daw ?
Would not grimalkin on it spring,
And tear it with his claw ?

X.

Should it be in a box immured,
And kept out of the sun ?
And when the mice it had devoured,
What then was to be done ?

XI.

For not one slice (up Richmond spoke)
Of mutton could she spare,
For why, 'twould make her butcher's book
Mount up she knew not where.

XII.

Euphemia, as became the fair,
Plead hard to let it off;
But such a sentimental air,
Jaques said, he thought was stuff.

XIII.

Meantime the Owl an egg did lay,
An argument most strong
For freedom, for it seemed to say,
"Take pity on my young."

XIV.

But Boehm protested that an owl
He once in Hungary had,
Which was as tame as any fowl,
Nor found its prison sad.

XV.

At last the bard proposed to put
The matter to the test,
And let it stay or fly about
Just as it thought was best.

XVI.

So out of doors we all did wend,
To try the point anon,
And would you know how it did end,
Just ask what you'd have done.

XVII.

And now again it flies about,
Warfare with mice to wage,
And we enjoy it more without,
Than pent up in a cage.

XVIII.

Now from this tale my muse would trust
This moral to educe,
(For I would fain, since rhyme I must,
My verses turn to use:)

XIX.

Think not, 'tis needful to possess
In order to enjoy,
Possession often brings distress,
And seldom fails to cloy.

THE LADY OF CAMERON'S SWANS.

I.

COME list to me, ye ladies fair,
Likewise ye ladies old,
Ye children small, devoid of care,
And all ye barons bold.

II.

I will to you a tale unfold
Of two sweet Swans, the pride
Of Lennox, beauteous to behold
When sailing side by side.

III.

On Lomond's island-studded tide,
In Cameron's sheltered bay,
These snow-white Swans ten months did glide,
Nor wished to fly away.

IV.

Nor had they cause, for every day
A full repast they found,
Laid by kind Alice in their way,
Spread out upon the ground.

V.

And oft the gentle ladies wound
Their way down from the hall
To give them crusts, and see them bound
Obedient to their call.

VI.

And people from the city all
Cried out in passing, See !
What birds are these with necks so tall ?
What creatures can they be ?

VII.

And those who met the sisters three,
After the "How d'you do,"
And "How's your mother the Ladye,"
Asked how the Swans were too.

VIII.

And even the savage hunter crew
 Their cruel guns laid low,
Awhile these pretty Swans to view
 Desporting to and fro ;

IX.

Which made their hardened bosoms glow
 With love, or awe, or fear,
And for some other sport forego
 The death they purposed here.

X.

And so beloved, it did appear,
 They were where they were hatched,
That messages from children dear
 Were oft to them despatched.

XI.

These pretty Swans were never matched
 By Rossdhu's valiant knight,
Whose swans full oft occasion watched
 To lure them to their bight.

XII.

And must the Muse, alas ! indite,
While tears are trickling down,
That both were missed one Autumn night,
When hazel nuts were brown.

XIII.

And whether they away had flown,
Or whether had been shot,
Or had been ta'en to Glasgow town
And changed for a note,

XIV.

No one could tell, although a boat
All round the lake was sent,
And fair occasions all were sought
To give the tidings vent.

XV.

Around Loch Catrine's wide extent
Strict search was made all day,
And from Ledard the shepherds went
And made a grand survey.

XVI.

Loch Ard was searched in every bay,
Loch Conn where herons dwell,
Loch Venacher and Loch Achray,
Loch of Menteith as well :

XVII.

And sweet Gleniffer heard the knell
By Stanley's castle bare,
For there these cygnets burst the shell,
First breathed the westland air.

XVIII.

But all in vain, no tidings e'er
Of these same birds were heard,
Although for them gold guineas rare
Were offered as reward.

XIX.

And when at length all hopes were barred
That they might still be found,
None knew their sorrow how to guard,
But all in tears were drowned.

XX.

And still kept looking round and round,
Far over the blue lake,
Deceived with every sight and sound
Which they for swans could take.

XXI.

And many, when their hearts did ache,
Took water lilies pure,
And kissed them for these dear Swans' sake,
As their sweet miniature.

XXII.

And Belritiro's bard, be sure,
With sorrow too was bent,
And to these Swans, his grief to cure,
A sonnet did invent.

XXIII.

But after long and deep lament
Was made for this dear pair,
A rumour round the country went,
Which made all people stare.

XXIV.

'Twas said that Swans they never were,
But only swans appeared;
And many stoutly did aver,
That this they always feared.

XXV.

And many things were then upcleared,
Which puzzled folk before;
How one dark night the sisters weird
Were heard upon the shore:

XXVI.

How once was heard a hideous roar,
At midnight, on the green,
And when all hastened to the door,
No living thing was seen.

XXVII.

How once two kelpies, strange of mien,
Were seen by Tibby Bell,
Conversing with these Swans one e'en,
When she was at the well.

XXVIII.

And things most curious that befell,
Now explanation found,
Which at the time none liked to tell,
But kept close and profound.

XXIX.

At last, when fields in frost were bound,
And leafless every tree,
When little robins, looking round,
Were trilling mournfully,

XXX.

These Swans, not liking pinched to be,
Came back, but changed so,
Such skin and bone become, woe's me !
No person could them know.

XXXI.

And when they fled, where they did go
Was never known, I ween,
But clear enough their state did show
They almost starved had been.

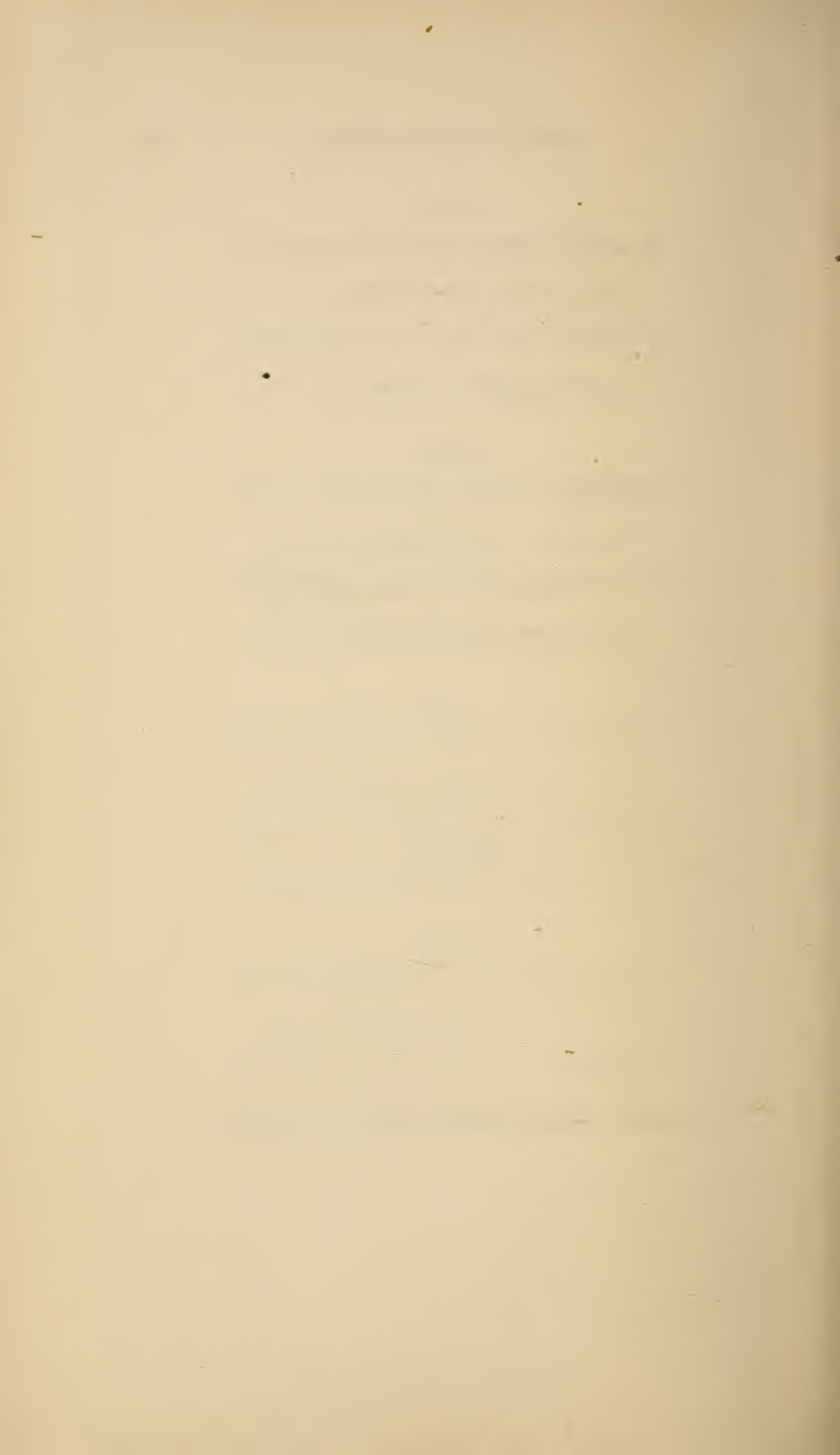
XXXII.

Now let us sing, Long live the Queen,
Prince Albert, long live he,
And their sweet children on the green
Late dancing by the Dee.

XXXIII.

And may this tale a lesson be
To all who wish to roam,
To stay content with their countrie,
And never stir from home.

THE END.



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: March 2009

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